

POSTVILLE COURTHOUSE

DRAWER 12A

ILLINOIS IN GENERAL

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**Illinois**

**Illinois Towns**

**Postville**

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

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# HISTORY OF LOGAN COUNTY ILLINOIS

A RECORD OF ITS SETTLEMENT, ORGANIZATION, PROGRESS  
AND ACHIEVEMENT

By LAWRENCE B. STRINGER

"Local history is the ultimate substance of national history." — William

VOLUME I

ILLUSTRATED

CHICAGO  
HOWELL PUBLISHING COMPANY  
1911



Jesse Huddley, owner the "Hudson" said that though one man was  
able to accomplish the "trip now" goes well. The "Savannah"  
is on her way. The main focus falling upon "Columbus" who can  
claim that it was three feet deep in the hold and took up all deck space  
where it lay. A cold wave following the snow, from the north  
with a high wind has driven the ice pack to the south and  
the "Lure" and "Wild" passengers have no little trouble during the night  
that their passage may enough to the side of the passes. A snow  
storm, before long overcame. Before an opening of snow  
and gales who attack by the movement of air or pressure from above.  
Columbus are having problems for such a trying time and find  
themself in difficult but were in more than frozen or could  
have been when suffered many from such as these. The difficulties are  
overcome through which the people of that country passed and the

water and suffering their punishment; we suffered little and those who survived us and are yet living recall no instance of such a severe winter as occurred at that time. Christopher L. Farnum, an attorney in one of the Northern Associations about the "deep snow" said: "During that winter we had to labor hard to think John C. Breckinridge to a trial, to drive our teams the field, and get them over the mud, and the roads; and we would find our trials completely covered by an inch of snow. The snow was two or three feet deep on a road carriage followed the next all day, and the weather was severe cold for us through the winter with a lot of poor stock."

James Hinsdale, at the Old Settlers meeting of 1875, said that he came to the country, with a number of fifty persons, that they came from a more southern country and the men spent the rest of winter, instead of house and their cattle and that only very often had clambers when the big snow came. But by saving forty-nine of the big ones in the two coldest bad clambers, one saving day, they nearly all were sick, they had no doctor, and a number of the settlers became disengaged with the patrols and were back again. Samuel Hinsdale used to relate that he moved into his new big house near the present site of Atmore. "the day after commencement of the deep snow" thus the house was somewhat covered, and having had a family and "was the snow on that long while, having rather days without a thaw, continually drifting in, until about noon, it reached the cards where it remained packed and was allowed to remain until spring." David Ward, Jr., one of the first presidents of the Old Settlers Association, is authority for the statement that during the winter of the deep snow the house had were covered with snowdrifts, which could be seen by the command. Isaac R. Judy, in his notes, always states that the snow was five feet deep, or an average, and varied in places, in fifteen and twenty feet. Fred Kuyng used to cross the river one person, he and his brother, gas down across and return by boat, which they afterwards passed, but could not determine. Two great general patrols would discharge a gun each, and when the last report came and someone predicted the snow continued to cover the white大陸, he concluded. The snow was so great by the morning when he crossed single, and that could have cost him his life.

#### THE DEEP SNOWS.

When the snows give the "deep snow" to be right, on the order of that another reported April 1865 occurred in the winter of 1864-65, when the blizzard was most prolonged, more than twice this year was broken on the eastern front. This was also bad in the early morning. This was also bad and very bitter in the early afternoon, when within, warming a strong

wind, drawing at the tops of a few mighty trees and then preceded by a deep hollow sound with no air blast, came over the country and sweeping west across the Copper Hills. The effect of the wind past on the coast line of water sharpshotted and pointed like gale and broken it. (Tuckwell, page 21) Other parties, who resided in their houses, wagons others, exposed to cold, were driven to the ground. Men, going to other parts of Nelly, or were just under a snowdrift took their horses, received a few rounds shot, running on the ice. Some thought out of bounds, some driven by their masters. Mr. Edwards, a witness from the cabin to a low rock, in a low house left his bed, at 4 A.M. Friday, gave the following account of his road during his return. On the morning of the second day, he observed the atmosphere was covered with smoke and the ground was a thick layer of snow. About noon rain began to fall with a violence without a moment's warning, so fast and long that it soon melted, freezing everything as it went. Under foot was a mass of mud and water, not so hot less than a mile or two of the violent government to any solid air. Captain J. S. Bragg, who was enroute from a neighboring mill to his old home, was struck by the trifling wind. The top of his cabin was pressed and his door bent in the opposite direction. Realizing the peril of his situation and fearing that if he did not find shelter immediately death would claim him, he drove rapidly in search of some partially raised, which he found in time to save his life. Those who had the misfortune to be overtaken by this icy storm and were unable to find shelter, quickly perished and many such was numbered among the losses.

Christopher C. Ewing, of Laramie, now deceased, reported his severe, said "In December of 1876, we passed unperceived another severe change in the atmosphere and lost nearly all their stock and property, and in some cases their own lives. The snow and frost lasted for a day or two, when a driving rain set in, which continued until two o'clock in the afternoon, melting the snow and converting it into a thin mud one. Suddenly, there came a gale, rushing wind from the northwest, which raged at a distance like a hurricane, and drove everything in its course. The water on the prairie was turned to waves and all who were out, suffered more or less, as on an instant thermometer changed from forty degrees above to thirty degrees below. This severe weather continued three days and resulted in much suffering throughout the country." J. I. Hadley in an Old Settler's Life at the annual meeting recalled the sudden change. "The north wind sent from Russia north," said he, "was suddenly a cold wind comes, which seemed to whiten the ground. Three of us were caught in the storm and the ice breaking theater and theater and the cold made us so we were compelled to stop at the home of Alfred Sosa for safety."

W. H. Brown, one of the most alert of the county, was so surprised at the sudden freeze, he found traps broken with sharp teeth and the wires between and the snare wire broken, they did not know how to close them. John Hopper, of Lincoln, illustrates the importance of the danger, by saying that it was "common as a drop of water." The author of the Lecture had a narrow escape from death at the time, his clothing being frozen on him and his arms to the middle when he arrived at his home. Many cases of subsequent deaths among the party settlers made due to exposure during the storm, and such occasions followed.

James Harvey Hildreth, who died at Mr. Pollock's residence on Sept. 12th, 1856, under circumstances which we consider of sufficient interest, during this sudden change of 40° in temperature, to relate to it. He came to the country in 1855, and was engaged in cattle raising, at this time he was a strong and rugged young man of about twenty-two years of age. In December of 1855 he, in company with a young man, by the name of Frazee, started on horseback, for Chicago. On the day of the sudden freeze, they had entered the border of a large prairie, in the northern part of the state, and the next winter was many miles distant. They had camped all evening, and the earth was covered with snow. They constructed a shanty, containing no more space than did odd like in enough passing through it. In order to load the shanty, they rode horses or a neighboring division, and having crossed it, turned northward to reach their course. That was about the middle of the afternoon. It suddenly began raining and the cold wave came, in all its fury, from the northwest striking them square in the face. They rode fast, but lost sight of any human habitation and their horses became absolutely unmanageable. They drifted with the wind or across a snow drift, blind to where they were. The cold becoming intense, death seemed to be imminent. As a last resort, they decided to kill their horses, take out the entrails and crawl into the carcass, to protect themselves from the cold. They dismounted, killed Frazee's horse, disengaged it and both crawled into the carcass, as far as they could, and covered themselves with robes. The animal beat, by this time, having been disengaged, they crawled out, with the intention of sheltering Mikkenay's home. In some way, however, they lost the only tools they had, and could not find it in the darkness. They then hurried about the living room, until about two o'clock in the morning. By that time Frazee had become so benumbed by the cold, that he sank to sleep and while so the shaggy form to death.

Mr. Mikkenay, in the meantime kept house burning, by jumping about, the moment it was daylight he mounted his horse and started in search of shelter. In running, he dropped his hat, but was afraid to stop and get it, for fear he would not have strength to return.

again. Darneluded, he rose about, could he rendev the house of a widow, supposed to be the Vermilion River. Seeing a house on the opposite shore, he made an outcry, which brought the occupant out. This did but little good, for the occupant, whose name turned out to be Benjamin Ross, was one of those unscrupulous outlaws, who were occasionally to be met with in the border. Ross yelled to Oldfield, that he could not do anything for him. A gun was fired from the opposite shore, but he started to be afraid of the returning gun. Ross then offered him a large sum, if he would eat a fowl and let it fall over the stream, so that he could cross. Ross still refused and directed Oldfield to a grove, which he said was a mile distant, where he would find a house. He went, but it was five miles, and the house proved to be a deserted cabin. He then returned to Ross' house and asked for help and was again refused. He then dissevered, crawled on the bank, found that the ate had closed, and was strong enough to pull him and crawled over. Arriving at the house, the tenant owner of the place refused to help him. Oldfield crawled over the fence, crawled to the bank and laid down near the fire. He was allowed to lie there, until four o'clock, that afternoon, but no assistance was given him, either by Ross or his wife. Finally, some long drivers came along and carried him to another house, where he was properly cared for. Afterward, the settlers of the neighborhood, fearing of the malice of Ross, decided to track out where punishment had been and one said that the runaway. Mr. Oldfield always expressed the belief, that his offering to pay liberly, for cutting down a tree across the river, had them to think that he had a large sum of money and that, if, to their surprise, he paid, they could obtain it. Mr. Oldfield was compelled then to the house of his brother in Vermilion County, where all his possessions were appropriated from both feet and the lower part of his fingers, except one joint of the thumb, on his right hand, which enabled him to hold a pen or driver's whip. His left foot never healed entirely and nearly twenty-two years after his misfortune his leg had to be amputated below the knee. This haled, but his lungs, already diseased, caused his death as before stated.

#### SUMMER SHOWER OF 1823

"On the night of Nov. 13, 1823, there occurred in this section of the state, a remarkable shower of meteors, stars apparently falling out from the clouds. Mr. Ewing, in his 'Old Settler's remembrance,' said: 'In November of 1823, was witnessed what was called a meteor shower, which in grandeur surpassed the great comet. From midnight until daylight, there was a blaze of meteors, so thick as were fishes and apparently everything was on fire. Some thought the end of the world had come and many got together and held prayer meetings.' Nalger

time, another person, thus described it: "Moving rapidly at one my course, I had proceeded but a little way from the house, when I discovered all the trees apparently in motion, shooting here and there, with a brilliancy that lit up the houses and earth. This continued until the sun rose. The Springfield Journal of Nov. 18, 1851, commenting on the phenomenon, said: "At three o'clock, p. m., the whole atmosphere was in motion which appeared to be the falling of myriads of masses of floating stars. At times the appearance was not simply compared to the falling of a shower of fire. The air was entirely calm and free from clouds. The scene presented was one of extraordinary splendor and grand magnificence in all who beheld it."

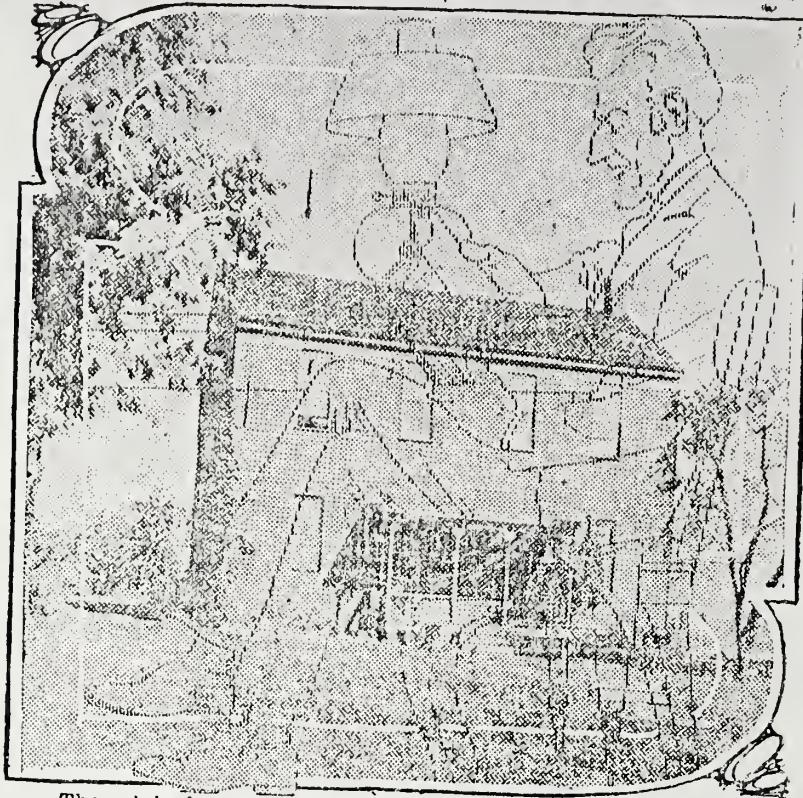
#### HARD TIMES.

In 1857 there came a killing financial frost. The state banks suspended specie payment and hard times set in with severity. From that time until about 1862, the mercantile experience greater financial embarrassment than at any other time in the previous history of the country. Money was an almost unknown commodity, all business transacted through the medium of trade or barter. Flour for its value in gold, a yard of cloth for a horse, a half dozen bags for a cow, and so on. Many were the circuits to which the articles were led, to make both ends meet. The growth of such articles as the people had to buy rapidly increased, while that of what they had to sell as rapidly declined. Ingots sold for \$1.25 cents per pound, coffee for 45 cents; calico or cotton for 10 cents per yard. Hogs brought from one dollar to \$1.25 per hundred pounds, and wheat about 25 cents per bushel.

#### SAWED-WOODEN'S WIFE.

In June of 1857 David Webster, the famous orator and statesman, passed through what is now Logan County, on his way from Springfield, via Peoria and Chicago to the East. Mr. Webster made a lecture trip that year, with his wife and a son. He was a guest for several days at Gov. Joseph Duncan, at his home in Jacksonville where Mr. Duncan delivered an address. Springfield had just been chosen the capital and Mr. Webster and party accompanied Gov. Duncan, from Jacksonville to the new capital. From thence, Mr. Webster's party proceeded to Peoria and from Peoria to Chicago. All the way throughout Illinois was made by stage & being before the day of railroads. The舞台 had to pass through the village of Middletown, which had been laid out two years previous. Just as the stage was leaving Middletown, an accident happened to the vehicle and a delay of several hours was necessary to make repairs. Soon Mr. Webster's identity became known, and

## OLD LINCOLN COURTHOUSE HISTORIC RELIC



The original old courthouse where the great emancipator, Abraham Lincoln, practiced law in Logan-co, Lincoln, Ill., still stands, an object of reverence for the residents who are doing all they can to preserve the structure as an historic relic.

1520

# PLAN FOR LINCOLN COURTHOUSE SHRINE

Old Postville Temple of Justice Now Is Occupied by Colored Family.

STANDS ALMOST INTACT

Great Emancipator Practiced Law There Before Winning National Fame.

LINCOLN, Ill., March 24.—Legislation providing an appropriation to restore the old Postville courthouse here, where Abraham Lincoln first practiced law, is suggested by central Illinoisans. It is probable the project will take definite shape in the near future.

Renewed interest in the old frame structure has been shown during the last few months. The old courthouse is occupied by a family of colored people.

When the Postville courthouse was erected in 1841 it was regarded as one of the most pretentious buildings on the prairies of Illinois. Few other counties boasted of so fine "a temple of justice." So sturdily was the old courthouse built that it stands today almost as sound as it did in Lincoln's time. Judge and Mrs. T. T. Beach, who own the property, once offered it to the county on condition that it be kept up, but the offer was not accepted. It was suggested that the building be used as a Lincoln memorial museum.

The greatest change made in the building since it was built was the removal of the great outside chimney. Old timers recall that the first floor contained three offices, for the county clerk, treasurer, and a justice of the peace, while the entire second floor was the courtroom.

Here Lincoln practiced from 1841 to 1848. He was in the habit of loafing, it is said, at the old Deskins tavern, across the way from the courthouse, where the postmaster had his headquarters, and part of which still is standing.

Several years ago the Daughters of the American Revolution marked the site of the Postville courthouse with a granite boulder with a bronze tablet attached.

James Herald 3-25-1923  
Washington D.C.

## House Where Lincoln Argued Many Cases Purchased by Ford

<sup>1717</sup>  
LINCOLN, Ill., Aug. 19.—(UP)—The old Postville courthouse here where Abraham Lincoln argued many of his cases nearly 90 years ago has been added to Henry Ford's growing list of antiques, it became known today.

The automobile manufacturer is expected to transport the building to Dearborn, Mich., and make it part of his American museum, which is to depict early stages of American life.

The purchase was made from Mrs. T. T. Beach, who has lived in the two-story frame structure for several years. The house was built in 1848 and Lincoln practiced law in it during the next eight years while traveling the Eighth Illinois judicial circuit.

Lincoln changed the name of the town here from Postville to Lincoln years later, by breaking a watermelon as a ceremony. At the time he predicted that "nothing named Lincoln ever amounted to much."

## Old Lincoln, Ill., Court House Is Bought by Ford

<sup>1929</sup>  
LINCOLN, Ill., Nov. 20.—(A.P.)—The old Postville courthouse, scene of many of Abraham Lincoln's lawsuits, has been bought by Henry Ford.

"Postville" was the name of Lincoln before the future President christened it after himself by breaking a watermelon, with the prediction that "nothing named Lincoln ever amounted to much."

Lincoln at the time was a young lawyer and the suggestion that his name be given to the new town was made by real estate men developing the project. It was indicated that Mr. Ford intended moving the old courthouse to Detroit.

# POSTVILLE'S RELIC TO BE PRESERVED

*Aug 9*  
**Interested in Restor-  
ing Early America  
Building.**

The old Postville court house in West Lincoln, where Abraham Lincoln practiced law continuously from 1840 until 1848, has been purchased by Henry Ford, automobile manufacturer, philanthropist and collector and patron of Lincolnia and Early America, the Lincoln Evening Courier learned today.

Arrangements for the sale were concluded Saturday by Mrs. T. T. Beach, owner of the historic building, with a representative of Mr. Ford, and it is understood here that the Ford interests plan to restore the building exactly as it stood in the early days, to leave the building standing on its original site near Postville Park, and maintain a custodian in charge of the place which will be fitted up as a monument of the early days.

News of the interest of Ford in the Lincoln court house was received by the Courier today from the Detroit News, which stated that it was reported in Detroit that Mt. Ford plans to move the building to Detroit to make it a part of his museum of Early America.

#### Won't Permit Removal.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Beach, in confirming the news of the sale, said the building had been sold, but was to remain in Lincoln. It was their understanding the building is to be restored and will stand on its original site, much as Mr. Ford took over and maintains a pioneer New England inn.

Under no consideration, they said, would they consent to removal of the building from Lincoln, as they would not sell the building to any one who desired to remove it.

The historic building for many years has been used for residential purposes. The interior rooms have been changed and a porch added, but otherwise it stands just as it did when Mr. Lincoln practiced law there.

A number of years ago Mrs. Beach offered the building to the county, without purchase cost, provided it would be maintained properly as a public relic. But the board of supervisors declined to pay the cost of maintenance, including a custodian.

#### Legion Interested.

There have been other movements since to restore and maintain the building as a Lincoln museum. Only this week the American Legion planned to ask for an option, hoping to interest the public in buying the building and maintaining it as a Legion proposition.

The old courthouse and site, in recent years, has variously been held as valued at between \$6,000 and \$8,000. An option was taken earlier this year by local people in the hope that the state might take over the old building as state property, but the plan was not adopted by state officials.

#### Removal Not Discussed.

While the attitude of Mr. and Mrs. Beach that they will not permit the courthouse to leave Lincoln was being expressed, word was awaited from Detroit as to Ford's plans. Removal of the building was not discussed, Mrs. Beach said, and she was astonished at the query from the Detroit News stating it was reported Mr. Ford intended to dismantle and move the building.

Mr. and Mrs. Beach said they would take the matter up at once with Mr. Ford and his agents, as they could not permit removal of the building. The Courier queried the Associated Press in Detroit, to get further information relative to the plans. It is known that Mr. Ford is building a pioneer city in Detroit, as a show place of early American buildings.

#### Can Be Retained.

Judge L. B. Stringer, advised of the purchase today, made the following statement:

"I am not advised as to the nature of the option on the Postville courthouse, given Henry Ford, whether or not it is final, exclusive or otherwise. If it means the removal of the priceless landmark from Lincoln to Detroit, I would certainly be heartsick. If the option is not exclusive, I would suggest the following as a plan of immediate action:

"(1) Let the directors of the Lincoln school district buy the square as a playground for the Jefferson school, using the north end of the square for such playground purposes and thus preserving the courthouse. This, in my judgment, can be legally done under the opinion rendered in *Reiger vs. Board of Education*, 287 Ill. 90, a Springfield case; or

"(2) Have the owners deed the square to the said Board of Education, under a personal guarantee of citizens as to the purchase price. Then under Section 339 of the School Law, the board can maintain and operate same from the building fund. Then, put on a drive for the purchase price.

"If the option is exclusive, the same method might be tried and I hardly believe that Mr. Ford would interfere with the plan, although that is mere guess work.

"In any event, Lincoln cannot very well afford, at any cost, to lose this building, without some effort to hold it."

Thus it will be seen from the above statement, legal ways are

opened up for retention of the building here if it should develop that the Detroit removal proposal is an actual fact. Mr. Ford has a number of agents empowered to act for him in obtaining historical relics, buildings, documents, etc., and the local courthouse purchase has probably not been given his personal attention.

The court house was built and was ready for occupancy in 1840. The first floor was used for offices. The second floor was used for court and court clerk's offices. In this court house, Abraham Lincoln practiced law until 1848, as he traveled the old Eighth Judicial Circuit. In this court house, Judge Samuel H. Treat held court and Peter Cartwright, the pioneer preacher, held revival services.

In the old Postville park, two blocks from the court house square, Abraham Lincoln was wont, during Court terms, to play "town ball" and "throw the maul" with the young men of the neighborhood and in this park, he made a number of addresses, during pioneer political campaigns. Mr. Lincoln stopped at an old tavern, opposite the court house, which tavern burned to the ground during the eighties.

In 1848, the county seat was removed from Postville to Mt. Pulaski, by a vote of the people. The Postville court house was sold to private parties and, later, the post office and a general store was installed in the building. Still later, it became a residence. The removal of the court house resulted in litigation in which Mr. Lincoln represented the county. As a matter of fact, Mr. Lincoln was really the attorney for Logan county from 1840 until he became President.

Abraham Lincoln after the Postville days, practised law in the city of Lincoln, as he traveled the old circuit from 1853 until he was elected President. The first court house built in Lincoln burned to the ground. The second one was razed to make way for the present court house structure.

# *Henry Ford Buys Old Postville Courthouse, Scene of Lincoln Law Practice—May Move It to Detroit*

24  
Logan County Shrine Sold by  
Mrs. Beach--Rejected by  
County.

(Special to The Pantagraph.)

LINCOLN, Aug. 20.—Postville courthouse, one of the places where Abraham Lincoln practiced law, has been bought by Henry Ford, motor magnate, according to announcement made Monday by Mrs. T. J. Beach, owner of the property.

Postville was the name of the Logan county seat in early history. Abraham Lincoln later christened it after himself, using a watermelon instead of the customary bottled beverage. He made the prediction that "nothing named Lincoln ever amounted to much."

#### Sponsored by Lincoln.

The building is located on route 4 in the western part of Lincoln. Abraham Lincoln practiced law there between 1840 and 1848.

A frame structure 24 by 40 feet, the courthouse has been turned around, since it was used as a county building.

In 1839 Lincoln sponsored a bill creating the county, and Postville became the county seat. At Lincoln's suggestion the county was named after Dr. John Logan of Murphysboro, a prominent legislator. John A. Logan, son of Dr. Logan, became one of the Civil war generals, and later United States senator from Illinois.

#### Rejected by County.

When a railroad was built east of Postville in 1852, the town which now is known as Lincoln came into being. It later absorbed Postville. The old courthouse and a few old homes are all that remains of Postville.

A boulder on the courthouse lawn, dedicated July 4, 1917, marks the site. Plans were worked out some time ago to preserve the courthouse as a Logan county historic relic. Mr. and Mrs. T. F. Beach bought the property to save it from destruction and offered it as a gift to the board of supervisors. Fear of cost of possible paving past the site caused supervisors to reject the offer by a vote of 4 to 1. Mrs. Beach was granted full title to the property by her husband.

#### Not to Be Moved.

The deal was closed Saturday by a representative of Mr. Ford who inspected the property and made arrangements with Mr. and Mrs. Beach. The abstract was to be forwarded to Detroit Tuesday.

## Logan County Historic Relic Sold.



Pictured above is the Postville courthouse, bought by Henry Ford. Reports that it may be removed to Detroit have been denied.

It is understood by Mr. and Mrs. Beach that Mr. Ford, who is a collector and patron of Lincolnia, plans to restore the historic building as it stood when Lincoln trod its halls, to leave the building on the original site and maintain it as a monument to early America.

In confirming the sale both Mr. and Mrs. Beach said that they understood that the building was to remain in Lincoln and that they would never consent to its removal to Detroit to be added to Ford's "Early America" park.

#### Would Call Deal Off.

Local persons interested in restoration of the building became alarmed when it was declared that the old courthouse was to be taken to Detroit and Mrs. Beach said that she would write to Mr. Ford for further information as to what would be done. Should Mr. Ford wish to move the courthouse Mrs. Beach declared that the deal would be off.

Only recently an option for \$5,000 was obtained by local persons and an attempt made to get the state to take it over. This failed and during the last week members of Logan post No. 263 American Legion had discussed a proposition to get behind a movement to acquire it.

For a number of years the old building has been used for residential purposes.

# Lincoln To Protest Attempt To Remove Postville Landmark

State Register Special Service

LINCOLN, Ill., Aug. 20.—Lincoln will resist any attempt by Henry Ford to remove the old Postville courthouse, of Abraham Lincoln fame, from this city to Detroit, as contemplated in advices from that city.

Mr. and Mrs. T. T. Beach, owners, who sold the property to a representative of Mr. Ford, said they did so in the belief that the building was to be restored and maintained here, and under no consideration will they consent to removal of the structure.

Judge L. B. Stringer, Lincoln historian and author, and former congressman at large, cited legal grounds by which the property could be retained here, even if sold.

It is the belief of Mr. and Mrs. Beach that Mr. Ford does not know they were under a misapprehension in the sale and expect the building to stay on its original site. According to advices from Detroit, Mr. Ford has been out of the city and could not be interviewed yesterday, but was expected to return today or tomorrow. It was stated by the Associated Press in Detroit that it was the understanding there that Mr. Ford had intended moving the building to Detroit for museum purposes.

#### Judge Makes Statement

Judge Stringer, in commenting on the situation, said:

"I am not advised as to the nature of the option on the Postville courthouse given Henry Ford, whether or not it is final, exclusive or otherwise. If it means the removal of the priceless landmark from Lincoln to Detroit, I would certainly be heartsick.

If the option is not exclusive, I would suggest the following as a plan of immediate action:

"(1) Let the directors of the Lincoln school district buy the square as a playground for the Jefferson school, using the north end of the square for such playground purposes and thus preserving the courthouse. This, in my judgment, can be legally done under the opinion rendered in Reiger vs. Board of Education, 287 Ill. 590, a Springfield case; or.

"(2) Have the owners deed the square to the said board of education, under a personal guarantee of citizens as to the purchase price. Then, under section 339 of the school law, the board can maintain and operate same from the building fund. Then, put on a drive for the purchase price.

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"In any event, Lincoln cannot very well afford, at any cost, to lose this building without some effort to hold it."

Register  
Springfield Ill.  
8-20-60

**FORD'S PROPERTY IN LINCOLN.**

Henry Ford has purchased the old Postville courthouse, in Lincoln, where Abraham Lincoln once practiced law. Mr. Ford has not announced the disposition that he will make of the historic property, but Lincoln citizens are apprehensive lest the motor magnate and collector of bulky Americana dismantle the old courthouse and move it to his Dearborn village that consists of various buildings of historical value that have been removed from their original sites.

Mr. Ford is not selfish in his collection of historic early American buildings. He does not plan to make money on such investments. His idea is to preserve the structures so that later generations may see them and derive from them knowledge of early American history, political and economic.

And how better can Mr. Ford further his idea than to leave the old Postville courthouse on its original site, amid the surroundings that it has known since early days? There are associations that bind the courthouse to Lincoln, the city and the man, and those associations would be lost should the building be moved. Much of the tradition and sentiment would be dissipated by a dismantling, removal and restoration. The air of authenticity would be lessened and visitors to the building in Dearborn would not be impressed, knowing of the removal. Lincoln trod the ground around the Postville courthouse. He knew the surroundings and they are hallowed by reason of that association. Mr. Ford can earn the gratitude of Lincoln admirers everywhere by leaving the old courthouse on its original site. To him will be given the credit for the preservation of the old structure.

The city of Lincoln, however, must realize that this situation could have been averted if the city or an association of citizens had secured the property for memorial purposes before it was discovered and purchased by one of Mr. Ford's agents. Cities that have similar shrines should see to it that they are safeguarded if they value them and desire to keep them.

Journal  
Springfield Ill.  
8-22-29

**Ford Wins in Fight for Lincoln's Court**

LINCOLN, Ill., Sept. 2.—Henry Ford has ironed out differences over the removal of the Postville court house, where Abraham Lincoln frequently appeared as a lawyer. He will remove it to Dearborn, Mich., he announced today.

Citizens objected to losing the landmark until Mr. Ford assured them the old building would be preserved for posterity.

NEW YORK CITY AMERICAN  
SEPTEMBER 3, 1929

**Ford May Make Visit to Lincoln**

Lincoln, Ill., Aug. 22.—It is possible Henry Ford will arrive in Lincoln at an early date to discuss the removal of the old court house in which Abraham Lincoln practiced law from the city of Lincoln to Detroit, Mich.

The noted automobile manufacturer will arrive here to settle the disposition of the court house, purchased recently from Mr. and Mrs. T. H. Beach and while in the city will be a guest at the Beach home on College avenue.

Stay  
Springfield Ill.  
8-22-29

**FORD AT LINCOLN BUILDING.**

Inspects Court House He Bought to Move to Dearborn, Mich.

LINCOLN, Ill., Sept. 2 (A.P.)—Henry Ford was in Lincoln for a few hours today to look at the old Postville court house, where Abraham Lincoln frequently tried cases, and to announce that the building would be moved to Dearborn, Mich.

Mr. Ford bought the building recently and when it became known that the automobile manufacturer intended to remove it from its historic surroundings a storm of protest arose. He assured Mrs. T. T. Beach, from whom he bought the old court house, however, that the surroundings at Dearborn would be as nearly like those in Lincoln as possible.

Mr. Ford, accompanied by three other men, said he was on his way home from an Eastern trip.

NEW YORK CITY TIMES  
SEPTEMBER 3, 1929

**CLING TO LINCOLN RELIC**

*Postville Citizens Hope Ford Lets Court House Remain.*

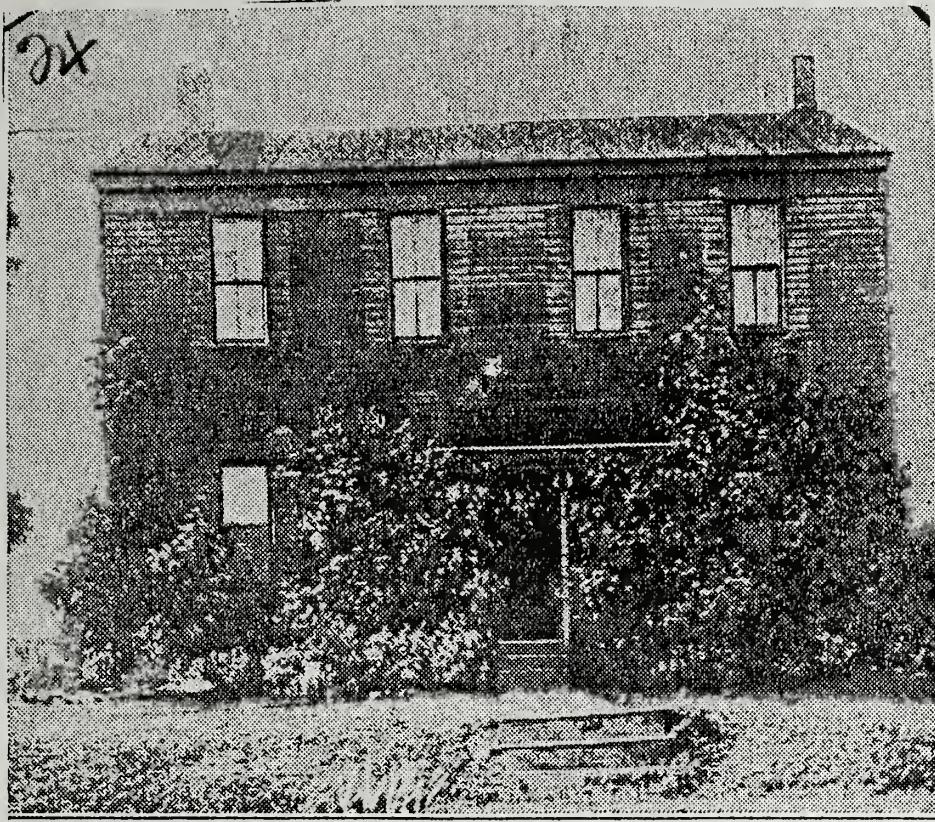
LINCOLN, Ill., Aug. 30 (A. P.)—Henry Ford, who recently purchased the old Postville Court House, in which Abraham Lincoln once practiced law, has met with opposition in his efforts to remove the historic building to Dearborn, Mich.

In a letter to Lawrence B. Stringer, county judge of Logan county, W. J. Cameron of Detroit, spokesman for Mr. Ford, said that the building was purchased with the intention of moving it to Dearborn "and giving it a setting exactly similar to that of Lincoln, even to the point of orienting it as it has always been."

In reply Judge Stringer said the community appreciated what Mr. Ford was doing to preserve items of American historical interest, but that to remove the court house from its present environment would turn it into an "empty shell."

NEW YORK CITY SUN  
AUGUST 30, 1929

Postville Courthouse



**FORD BUYS LINCOLN RELIC**—The old Postville Court House at Lincoln, Ill., first court house of Lincoln County, which has been bought by Henry Ford. It was here that Abraham Lincoln fought many of his lawsuits before he became President. *Aug. 12 1919.*  
Associated Press Photo

**COURTHOUSE WHERE  
LINCOLN ARGUED IS  
PROPERTY OF FORD**

LINCOLN, Ill., Aug. 19.—(UP)—The old Postville courthouse here where Abraham Lincoln argued many of his cases nearly 90 years ago has been added to Henry Ford's growing list of antiques, it became known today.

The automobile manufacturer is expected to transport the building to Dearborn, Mich., and make it a part of his Americana museum, which is to depict early stages of American life.

The purchase was made from Mrs. T. T. Beach, who has lived in the two story frame structure several years. The house was built in 1848 and Lincoln practiced law in it during the next eight years while traveling the eighth Illinois judicial circuit.

Lincoln changed the name of the town here from "Postville" to Lincoln years later, by breaking a watermelon as a ceremony. At the time he predicted that "nothing named Lincoln ever amounted to much."

Star  
Rockford, Ill.  
8-20-29

# Ford Desires To Move Old Court House

(Special to the Courier)

DETROIT, Mich. Aug. 20—Officials of the Ford Museum of Americana at Dearborn, Mich., refused to state whether or not Henry Ford, who recently purchased the old Postville Courthouse at Lincoln, Ill., would move the building to his Museum at Dearborn.

In the absence of Mr. Ford from the city, William J. Cameron, former editor of the Dearborn Independent and now Ford's associate in the museum enterprise, said he was unable at present to state whether or not Ford would bring the old Lincoln relic to his museum.

It was understood unofficially in Dearborn however, that this was his intention. Mr. Cameron said he had been advised only recently that Mrs. T. T. Beach, former owner of the courthouse would not permit moving the building. While he would not comment definitely, Cameron intimated that Mrs. Beach's decision was unexpected.

He said he had not been informed of the price Ford's representative paid for the building. It was assumed in Detroit that Mrs. Beach's determination to refuse removal of the building was not made known to Ford previous to the purchase, and that for this reason, Ford officials were reticent to comment until the matter had been settled with Mrs. Beach.

Ford has purchased many historical buildings throughout the country for his museum, and it was expected that the Lincoln relic would be brought to Dearborn to take a place with others of a similar character.

# ALL U. S. EYES LINCOLN; ASK FORD'S PLANS

## Detroit Advices Indicate Removal of Courthouse.

*Aug. 20*

While the eyes of the entire country were turned on the Postville courthouse today, following word that Henry Ford had purchased the old building where Abraham Lincoln practiced law, this city was awaiting personal word from Mr. Ford as to his intentions concerning the landmark.

The Courier today received word from the Associated Press in Detroit, stating that it was understood in Detroit that Mr. Ford plans to move the courthouse from Lincoln to Detroit, for his museum village of pioneer Early America buildings.

Mr. Ford, however, had been out of the city, and the Associated Press awaited his return today to obtain an interview for the Courier as to his plans.

Previous word received by the Courier yesterday from the Detroit News declared it was reported in Detroit that Mr. Ford, in purchasing the courthouse, plans to dismantle it, moving it to Detroit and reassemble it there.

Mrs. T. T. Beach, who sold the property through a representative of Mr. Ford, today was awaiting a reply from the Detroit manufacturer. She wrote yesterday saying that it was her understanding that the building was to be restored and maintained in Lincoln on the original site, and she would be unwilling to permit removal.

Mrs. Beach told the Courier she would refund to Mr. Ford if it was his plan to take the building away from Lincoln, as nothing was said by the agent about removal of the old courthouse from its original site.

### Object of New Interest.

Meanwhile the historic building was the object of interest not only here but in all parts of the country.

Tourists stopped in large numbers to inspect the building that had attracted the interest of Henry Ford. They bought picture postal cards to send friends, and nearly all agreed that it would be a shame to take the building away from its historic setting.

### Newspapers Interested.

The Courier today, as yesterday, continued to be deluged with newspaper requests for information and pictures.

First word of Ford's interest in the sale was received here from the Detroit News. The Courier informed the Associated Press, and newspapers quickly queried the office here for additional data.

A picture, accompanying the Associated Press account, was published in today's Chicago Tribune.

From the New York Times came a request this morning for a picture of the building bought by Ford. The Newspaper Enterprise Association, of Cleveland, and the Associated Press photograph department, as well as individual newspapers, were furnished with post card views of the building as it appeared in yesterday's Courier.

### Urge Building Remain.

Judge L. B. Stringer today dispatched the following telegram to Henry Ford:

"Rumored that your agents have purchased old courthouse here in which Lincoln practiced law, with intent to remove same to Detroit. Building has been Lincoln landmark here for nearly a century. Am appealing on behalf of community, to your well known humanity, that building be not removed but be allowed to remain on present site."

"Lawrence B. Stringer,  
"County Judge."

# Inquire For Postville

*(Aug 27)*

One of the first questions asked by many tourists passing through Lincoln daily is the location of the Postville court house where Abraham Lincoln practiced law, brought into nationwide fame since purchased by Henry Ford.

Service station attendants, garage proprietors, employees of restaurants and stores are all engaged in pointing out the location of the historic landmark.

One man drove up to the Deep Rock station at Kickapoo and Pekin streets this morning and asked to be directed to the court house. He said he had read of the reported pending visit of Henry Ford while eating breakfast in another city.

## As Others See It.

How others outside Logan county regard the Postville court house was illustrated today by the following editorial in the Illinois State Journal:

Henry Ford has purchased the old Postville court house, in Lincoln, where Abraham Lincoln once practiced law. Mr. Ford has not announced the disposition what he will make of the historic property, but Lincoln citizens are apprehensive lest the motor magnate and collector of bulky Americana dismantle the old courthouse and move it to his Dearborn village that consists of various buildings of historical value that have been removed from their original sites.

Mr. Ford is not selfish in his collection of historic early American buildings. He does not plan to make money on such investments. His idea is to preserve the structures so that later generations may see them and derive from them knowledge of early American history, political and economic.

And how better can Mr. Ford further his idea than to leave the old Postville courthouse on its original site, amid the surroundings that it has known since early days? There are associations that bind the court house to Lincoln, the city and the man, and those associations would be lost should the building be moved. Much of the tradition and sentiment would be dissipated by a dismantling, removal and restoration. The air of authenticity would be lessened and visitors to the building in Dearborn would not be impressed, knowing of the removal. Lincoln trod the ground around the Postville courthouse. He knew the surroundings and they are hallowed by reason of that association. Mr. Ford can earn the gratitude of Lincoln admirers everywhere by leaving the old courthouse on its original site. To him will be given credit for the preservation of the old structure.

The city of Lincoln, however, must realize that this situation could have been averted if the city or an association of citizens had secured the property for memorial purposes before it was discovered and purchased by one of Mr. Ford's agents. Cities that have similar shrines should see to it that they are safeguarded if they value them and desire to keep them.

## Discuss Removal of

# Postville Courthouse

*Aug 26*

In response to the recent telegram of Judge L. B. Stringer to Henry Ford, appealing that the old Postville courthouse be not removed to Detroit, but be allowed to remain on its present site, W. J. Cameron, of Detroit, one of the Ford executives, and spokesman for Mr. Ford during his absence, writes that it was Mr. Ford's original plan to move the buildings, and sets forth plans for its preservation.

Judge Stringer replied today, expressing appreciation of Mr. Ford's work in preserving early American tradition in his Dearborn village, but declaring the value of the building from a historic standpoint, would be destroyed by removal from the heart of the Abramam Lincoln country. He told of steps that had been taken to interest the public in taking over the building as a local memorial to Lincoln, and again urged that the plans of removal be reconsidered.

## Ford's Historic Village.

Mr. Cameron's letter follows:

Dearborn, Michigan,

August 22, 1929.

Hon. Lawrence B. Stringer,  
County Judge,  
Lincoln, Illinois.

Dear Sir:

Mr. Ford thanks you for your telegram and asks me to state the matter to you as it appears to us. For a long time Mr. Ford has believed that if certain kinds of Americana were to be preserved to the nation, the time to do it was now. Things which are now considered worthy to be kept as records or memorials of the past have been for generations in the communities where they originated, but, with increasing danger from loss or local indifference, many of them were in need of care. To prevent the deprivation which loss by fire or indifference would cause, Mr. Ford determined to erect here in the Central West a great museum and American Village where all these treasured things could be gathered together and their perpetuity assured far beyond the means of private owners or public communities, however much their desire, to do so.

In the progress of this work we became interested in the old Court-house at Lincoln, Illinois. Learning that its past had been rather precarious and that it had been practically saved from decay by a resident of the town who would part with control of it if it were to be preserved, we purchased the old building with the intention of moving it to the American Village and giving it a setting exactly similar to that at Lincoln, Illinois, even to the point of orienting it as it always had been. We supposed that in doing this we were taking steps that would insure protection to the building as long as its material endures.

At Dearborn millions will see it, whereas comparatively few would see it at Lincoln, Illinois, and the name of Lincoln, Illinois,—the town associated with an event in the life of Abraham Lincoln—would become

very widely known. It would be part of our plan and our pleasure, to give Lincoln, Illinois, all the credit that belongs to it through this building. The setting would be most worthy. We believe that if the people of your community knew the extent and character of Mr. Ford's works in this direction, they would feel gratified that their town had a part in it and that the name of their town was to be held so constantly and so honorably before the eyes of so many millions of students, visitors and travellers.

I have set forth these considerations briefly for your consideration and would be very glad to have your further views.

Very truly yours,  
FORD MOTOR COMPANY,  
W. J. Cameron.

## Stringer In Reply.

In his reply, Judge Stringer declared the community appreciates what Mr. Ford is doing to preserve American history, and his interest in the courthouse here, but declared that it is the Postville building's environment that makes it worth while.

Without its environment, Judge Stringer said, the building itself becomes a mere empty shell. He pointed out that located in Postville, the old Lincoln courthouse is equally distant from Lincoln's tomb and from Old Salem. It is associated with the Lincoln circuit marking of county seats on the old eighth judicial circuit traveled by Mr. Lincoln, and the building's authenticity would be dissipated, the judge declared, were it to be removed from its historic setting and local association.

The writer declared that while he might be regarded as biased from a local viewpoint, aside from that, removal of the courthouse is something of interest affecting the people of Illinois, to whom it means a great deal because of their personal experiences of Lincoln.

He told of the various movements to get the courthouse taken over as part of the state park system, and to interest local associations in taking the building over. The latest movement, started by the American Legion, to acquire and preserve the building here, was halted by the purchase by Mr. Ford.

## Expect Mr. Ford To Come.

Mrs. T. T. Beach, who sold the building to Mr. Ford's representative under the impression that the building was to be refained here, was awaiting word today as to when Mr. Ford expects to come here for a conference. She received word that Mr. Ford was expected back in Detroit soon, at least by yesterday. According to the representative who made the preliminary purchase negotiations here, Mr. Ford expects to come to Lincoln to talk the matter over with Mrs. Beach, and a definite date for his trip here was pending.

## SAVE THE LINCOLN MEMORIALS.

Champaign News Gazette:

"On the record of thy years

"Abr'm Lincoln's name appears—Illinois."

The name of Abraham Lincoln, martyred president, always will remain ~~on~~ the records of Illinois, but the material things that bound him to the state are disappearing rapidly. The latest movement is the sale of the Postville court house to Henry Ford, announcement of which appeared in print during the last few days. Postville was an early town in Illinois, later designated as Lincoln and now known by that name. Abraham Lincoln "christened" the town, and in a bantering tone declared that "nothing named Lincoln would ever amount to much." The residents of Lincoln no doubt will insist that Lincoln erred in that statement, but will accept it as a jocular remark of a self-conscious man.

But the point is that every community should retain the landmarks that associate its illustrious sons and link the past with the future. It may be that Ford will permit the Postville court house to remain at Lincoln and make of it a shrine. Again, he may raze it and reassemble it at some distant point, forever lost to Illinois and to the city of Lincoln.

That would be a calamity. Every community needs its landmarks for the influence they have on the younger generations. It is all very well to read of the high ideals of those who are gone. Much that is good can be absorbed in this manner. But how much more influential is something of a physical nature. The child may read of Lincoln, of Washington, and other American heroes—and forget. But there is little fear of him forgetting once he has said: "I stood where Lincoln stood;" or "I was in the room where the first American flag was made."

The child who has touched the Liberty bell in Philadelphia, or has seen the Constitution of the United States under its colored glass covering in Washington is better able to grasp the significance of these landmarks of liberty than the child who has merely seen the pictures of them and read the descriptions.

Every community has its landmarks that are worth preserving. It may be they are not mementoes of such famous men as Lincoln and Washington, but nevertheless they should be preserved. The community which does have mementoes of Lincoln should guard them closely and not permit them to be desecrated or destroyed. There is a certain thrill in visiting such places as have been occupied by our national heroes, or viewing articles which have been associated with them in a personal manner.

We of Champaign-Urbana, and others living on Route 10, should give thought each time we travel the highway that Lincoln followed the same route. The thought should be expanded into a resolve to adopt the high ideals of Lincoln. Such thoughts should be transmitted to the younger generation for the moral effect they would have.

No doubt there are numerous communities in this part of Illinois which have physical mementoes of Lincoln. Each community should search out such landmarks and preserve them. If the Postville court house is removed from Lincoln, future generations there will regret their loss. And so will it be with other communities which discover too late that they have lost something of unestimable value, something which may be used as a physical example of the value of a citizen to his community, state, or nation. The future is built on the past, and these relics of the past serve to form a tangible link between the past and the future. By all means, we should preserve the landmarks which designate events in the progress of the country.

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# TALKS PLANS FOR REMOVAL OF LANDMARK

Argues History Best  
Served in Dearborn  
Museum.

Henry Ford, multimillionaire automobile manufacturer and collector of historic buildings, drove into Lincoln unannounced yesterday to inspect the Postville courthouse, of Abraham Lincoln fame, and to get the community's viewpoint on removal of the structure.

He visited the historic building, which he has purchased for removal to his Dearborn Village of Early Americana, visited with Mr. and Mrs. T. T. Beach from whom he recently bought the property, and conferred with Judge L. B. Stringer, Lincoln historian; Mayor David W. Clark, and D. F. Nickols, city superintendent of schools.

Mr. Ford talked freely with reference to the proposed removal of the courthouse to Dearborn, but did not definitely state whether or not he would remove it.

#### Looking for Argument.

"If I had definitely determined to remove the courthouse, I would not be discussing the matter with you," said Mr. Ford. "I am here to get your viewpoint and to give you mine. I am looking for an argument."

Mr. Ford took the position that he was really building a college for the young at Dearborn in his American Village, where he was assembling those mementoes of early America which might teach the rising generation what he termed "a sense of justice." "The old Postville courthouse fits into this scheme," he said.

"At Dearborn," he stated, "millions will see the old structure and students of all countries could study it in its relation to the development of America. In its present location, it would be visited in a random fashion by but few."

#### Not Preserved Here.

Mr. Ford argued that the community of Lincoln could not properly preserve the building as the expense would be too great. At Dearborn, the timbers would be scientifically treated in such a manner that the building would last for five hundred years."

#### Travels in Ford Car.

Mr. Ford, traveling with his chauffeur in a 1929 sedan from Mr. Ford's factories, arrived at noon without previous announcement. He spent about twenty minutes at the Beach home, and then went out to inspect the building, returning to inquire about the original window frames which had been removed and stored on the Beach farm.

Mrs. Beach said that she was assured by Mr. Ford that the building would be kept and preserved as it should be and declared to him: "I sold it—you have the right to move it."

Mrs. Beach said: "Mr. Ford impressed me so much; so gracious and nice I was charmed to meet him and I think he is doing a great thing at Dearborn."

Before leaving Mr. Ford said he might return with Mrs. Ford for a longer visit with Mr. and Mrs. Beach.

During the conference with Judge Stringer, Mayor Clark and Mr. Nickols, held at the Commercial Hotel, Mr. Ford turned to Judge Stringer and said that he had seen a newspaper item in which Judge Stringer was reported as saying that if the building was removed from its environment, it would be a "meaningless and empty shell," but that perhaps he was misquoted.

#### In Lincoln Country.

Judge Stringer stated that he was not misquoted, that he had said just that thing, that he believed it then and that he still believes it—that the building stood in the heart of the Lincoln country, within a short distance of Lincoln's tomb and New Salem, that Lincoln trod the soil there and that it was the environment which gave historic value to the old structure. Prof. Nickols and Mayor Clark contended that the place for the building was just where it was and where it had been for a century.

Mr. Ford, on the contrary, believed that to allow the building to remain on its present site would be the way to make it "an empty shell," that in time it would disintegrate; that an attempt to make it a museum would be fruitless, as it would go the way of other attempts of that kind, but that at Dearborn, it would be perpetuated.

#### For "Greatest Good."

"My only desire," said Mr. Ford, "is to square my own conscience with what I think will be for the greatest good to the greatest number of people."

Mr. Ford sympathized with the

sentiment of the community in the local attachment to the old relic, but thought that the citizens should look at the matter from a broader viewpoint. He spoke for the co-operation of the community with him in making a perpetual memorial for the town at Dearborn, where, the world would witness it.

#### Asks for Statue.

During the conference Mayor Clark asked Mr. Ford that in the event the old courthouse was moved if he would erect a life sized statue of Abraham Lincoln on the site. Mr. Ford replied that he would take good care of the ground, but that he could make no promises as to the statue.

The interviewers found Mr. Ford to be intensely human and easy of approach. He invited the interviewers to be his guests at the opening of the American Village October 21st. He also stated that he contemplates another visit to Lincoln in the near future.

Mr. Ford left as unostentatiously as he came, going directly back to Dearborn. He said that he had recently returned to Detroit from a visit with Edison in the east. On leaving Mr. Ford said that he wanted to get back home by last night.

# COMMITTEE TO SEEK PLAN TO SEND FORD

Conference of Citizens  
Called for Next  
Wednesday.

A concerted community movement, designed to devise definite plans for the saving of the historic old Postville courthouse for the city of Lincoln, was launched today.

It came simultaneously with the beginning of work on erection of a five-foot protective fence around the property under direction of Henry Ford, the building's new owner.

Representatives of a number of civic and patriotic organizations of the city, interested in preserving the landmark here as the community's memorial to Abraham Lincoln, will be invited to attend a meeting in the Evening Courier office next Wednesday evening to consider a course of action.

It is hoped at this meeting that the way will be paved for a tangible proposal to be made to Mr. Ford, who bought the building for removal

to his Dearborn museum village, but who has announced no final decision as to its dismantling and removal.

Judge L. B. Stringer, Mayor D. W. Clark and D. F. Nickols, city school superintendent, all of whom conferred with Mr. Ford while the automobile manufacturer and philanthropist was in the city last Monday, have consented to serve as a temporary emergency committee at this meeting, and will lead the discussion of various courses of action that may be adopted. Judge Stringer will preside, and it is expected that a permanent organization will be effected, and an executive committee will be named.

The Courier, in arranging this meeting, feels that thus far the community has been remiss in making any definite proposals to Mr. Ford in support of the universal demand that the courthouse be left on its original foundations, and not be removed to a state foreign to the environment of Abraham Lincoln.

#### Fear Loss of Building.

In the belief that if action is not forthcoming and in the absence of any universal appeal or definite proposal, Mr. Ford will shortly dismantle and remove the building, the Courier has volunteered to serve as a clearing house in which the interested organizations of the city can consider action before it is too late.

The Courier is informed by agents of Mr. Ford that no final decision has been reached as to orders for removal of the Postville courthouse. While Mr. Ford has been informed the city wishes to retain its Lincoln landmark and opposes its removal, he has been given no concrete proposal. If action is to be taken, and a logical appeal made to Mr. Ford, it must be done before the building has been reassembled in Michigan.

#### Several Proposals.

Among proposals that will be discussed will probably be the following:

1—That Mr. Ford maintain the building in its present location as a lasting memorial to Abraham Lincoln. Several hundred thousand tourists on Route 4, the main highway between Chicago and St. Louis would thus see the Ford-Lincoln memorial annually.

2—That the American Legion, which has previously laid plans to take over the building as a shrine, be granted ownership for maintenance as a public memorial.

3—That ownership be vested in the city board of education, which could maintain a west-side public library in the building without added taxation.

4—That in the event Mr. Ford elects to remove the building to Dearborn, the ground be made available to a local Lincoln memorial association or other organization and a replica of the building be erected with funds raised by public subscription.

5—That in the event Mr. Ford moves the building he be asked to erect a lifesize statue to Lincoln to

permanently mark the site.

At the preliminary round table discussion, organizations to be invited will include the Chamber of Commerce, American Legion, Kiwanis club, Rotary club, Trades and Labor Council, Lincoln Woman's club, Logan Bar Association, Logan Boy Scouts, G. A. R., D. A. R., Spanish American War Veterans, City Teachers' Club, city officials and others.

#### Enclose Entire Block.

Local workmen today began work on the fence, ordered by Ford's representatives, to be erected around the entire city block occupied by the courthouse. It will have but one entrance gate, located on the west side. Until decision is reached as to the final disposition of the property Mr. Ford desires that it be safeguarded from curio hunters. George Watkins will be on duty as watchman.

George Eblin, a photographer sent here by Mr. Ford, took exterior views yesterday, and today planned to take a series of interior views.

Complete specifications of the building, exterior and interior, were drafted yesterday afternoon by R. F. Ginzel, for possible use if the city is ever required to build a replica.

#### Ford Deed Recorded.

C. T. Newton, purchasing agent of Henry Ford in the Early Americana Village enterprise, left Lincoln late yesterday afternoon with the deed to the half block courthouse property in his pocket. He closed the final negotiations with Mrs. T. T. Beach, former owner, in carrying out the terms of the original contract. The deed was duly recorded and gives the consideration as \$1.00, etc.

It was Mr. Newton's fourth visit here since he obtained an option on the property three weeks ago today. He expects to return in weeks or months, whenever decision is made, one way or the other, as to disposition of the building.

#### Ford Personally Interested.

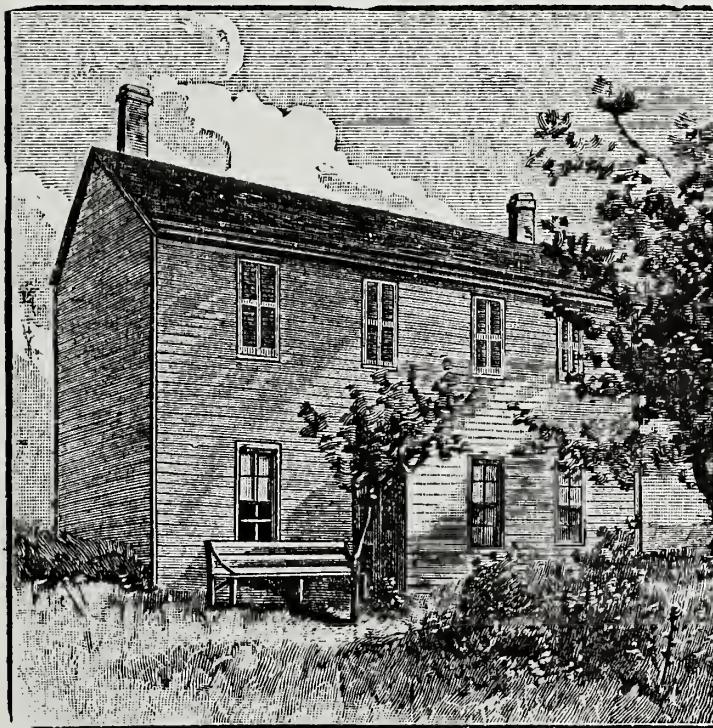
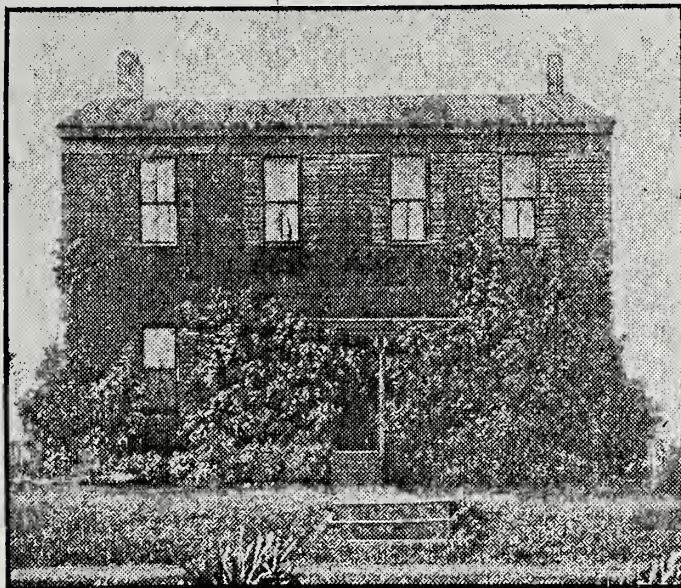
Mr. Newton said this was the first time to his knowledge that Mr. Ford had personally interested himself to the extent of going to see first hand any of his historic purchases before they were removed, or to confer with citizens relative to their viewpoint on the matter.

When Mr. Ford was here he carried a pile of newspaper comments relative to the desire of the community that the building be left here. He declared he came for an argument and stressed the importance of his national memorial viewpoint as opposed to the local viewpoint.

A former Lincoln resident, Mrs. Helen Wendell Fitzmaurice, of Flint, Mich., is responsible for Mr. Ford's interest in the old building here.

Mrs. Fitzmaurice at one time resided at the William Fogarty home in Lincoln next door to the Beach's on College avenue. She is acquainted with both Mr. Newton and Mr. Ford and prevailed upon them to save and restore the building.

## Then and Now



Above is the old Postville courthouse in West Lincoln as it appears today, and below is an early picture showing the building as it looked when Abraham Lincoln practiced law there. The porch was added when the building became a residence.

# 'Dream-Town' of Postville Founded 100 Years Ago; Is Now Part of West Lincoln

State Register Special Service

LINCOLN, Ill.—One hundred years ago this spring, when the dog-tooth violets and red-bud were blooming along the timbered banks of Salt and Kickapoo Creeks, a rough-and-ready, unlettered but visionary jack-of-all-trades who had been a Baltimore ship chandler looked upon the pleasantly rolling country and dreamed a dream. He would found a town that would make him rich and famous.

The adventurer, who had started a store and half-finished hostelry at Waynesville the previous year as a detour on his expected road to untold wealth in the new western world, was Russell Post, dynamic trail blazer who was destined, it developed, to be always a half-step behind success.

Post founded Postville, now a section of West Lincoln, the village antedating the city of Lincoln by 18 years. But post was caught in the vortex of the speculative financial crash of 1837—when flour went to \$11 a barrel and corn to \$1.15 a bushel—and the buildings and lots of his dream-town went at forced sale for one-tenth their expected value.

Russell Post, a broken man, made wagons for a time in Waynesville, went south to New Orleans and still dogged by failure tried St. Paul, Minn. Here he achieved more than local fame as a faith healer, although when he fell sick and discouraged his faith was insufficient to heal himself.

#### Older Than Chicago

Postville, older than the city of Chicago, is observing its centennial year only by a series of school plays and pageants; community programs and local commemoration, for general city-wide observance has been deferred because of the approaching centennial of Logan county which will be observed in 1939.

The original town of Postville, including 40 square blocks, was laid out around a now vanished business section west and south of the present Postville park, where Abe Lincoln used to play "town hall" with the villagers during the time he rode the eighth judicial circuit between 1839 and 1860 when he was elected president.

The Postville courthouse, pur- and moved in 1929 by Henry Ford to his historical Dearborn, Mich., village, was not included in the original town when Postville was founded, but was built soon after the county was created in 1839.

When Russell Post platted the town Abraham Lincoln was still a young surveyor pouring over his books for his bar examination that year, and trying to forget the death of his beloved Ann Rutledge.

Andrew Jackson was president, and John Reynolds was governor down at

Vandalia where Post, after his Postville town lot bubble had burst lobbied in a campaign to move the state capital to Waynesville. He mustered but a single vote in the legislature.

Post's dream died but his town lived and grew, acquiring several additions before it was eclipsed by the new city of Lincoln in 1853 when Abraham Lincoln drew up incorporation papers and named and christened the new town across the shining new Chicago and Alton rails to the east.

#### Town-Non-Existent

Non-existent as a town today Postville's business is confined to a few gas stations, route taverns, outlying groceries, cabin camps and a garage. Its most important asset is the Lincoln State School and Colony, occupying the site of the southside timber where Postville pioneers gathered hickory nuts and walnuts as children.

The last church in Postville, the Lincoln Hill Presbyterian mission, has been abandoned. The section has one school, the modern Jefferson school on Fifth street, where the old tower bell of the first Postville school, resurrected by Charles Hirtman, head school janitor, was restored this centennial spring and again rings Postville pupils to their books.

Postville has known many noted figures in its century of history, but three of them stand out—Abraham Lincoln, Russell Post and Peter Cartwright, famous Methodist evangelist who used to crusade in the old courthouse against liquor and higher education.

Mr. Lincoln, who defeated Preacher Cartwright for congress in 1846, used to try law cases in daytime in the same courtroom where Cartwright hurled his revival barbs at night. In that campaign Logan county gave Lincoln 390 votes and Cartwright 166.

Central Illinois visitors at Ford's Dearborn-Postville courthouse today find in that courtroom made historic by Lincoln, Cartwright, Stephen T. Logan, John T. Stuart, Judge David Davis, Judge Samuel Treat, Edward D. Baker and others, a perpetual fire burning in the original fireplace, never to be extinguished so long as the building stands.

The first house built in Postville was a log structure erected by John Sutton in 1836 facing the town park on the north. Sutton served meals to travelers and when not too numerous housed them overnight. The first store was built the same year by Richard Ackman and William Rankin, also a hewn log affair, erected at Fourth and Main streets. It was later occupied by J. F. Boy and stood as a landmark until recent years when destroyed by an incendiary. There is not a building 100 years old standing in Postville or Lincoln today.

Seth M. Tinsley soon erected a store, conducted by James Primm, who became first postmaster, and William McGraw built a large house

where he accommodated overflow travelers from Sutton's.

#### Deskins First Sheriff

It remained for John Deskins to build the first real hotel. This was on Fifth street across from the courthouse which was built three years later. Deskins became the first sheriff and later a member of the legislature. One of the earliest residences was the Melton house, built of timbers and located north of the park. It was later occupied by William Russell, veteran of the War of 1812, and grandfather of Harry L. Russell and Claude Russell, present well known residents.

Deskins' tavern, managed by John Allison, flourished so the owner built a second story in 1837. This was the recognized hostelry during early terms of court. In fact court was held by Judge Samuel Treat in the tavern dining room until the courthouse was completed. Postmaster Primm was the first court clerk and master-in-chancery, and Sheriff Deskins appointed Eli Enslow as first bailiff.

The first case tried in the hotel was prosecution of a thief who stole a coat from William McGraw, a pioneer for whom a street has been named. There was no jail as yet and after indictment of the prisoner it was planned to take him to Springfield next day for safe keeping. He jumped through a window and escaped during the night when the bailiff dozed.

#### Recalls Town Lore

Mrs. F. H. Klemm, who recalls

LINCOLN ILL COURTHOUSE  
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 1929.

# TALKS PLANS FOR REMOVAL OF LANDMARK

Argues History Best  
Served in Dearborn  
Museum.

Henry Ford, multimillionaire automobile manufacturer and collector of historic buildings, drove into Lincoln unannounced yesterday to inspect the Postville courthouse, of Abraham Lincoln fame, and to get the community's viewpoint on removal of the structure.

He visited the historic building, which he has purchased for removal to his Dearborn Village of Early Americana, visited with Mr. and Mrs. T. T. Beach from whom he recently bought the property, and conferred with Judge L. B. Stringer, Lincoln historian; Mayor David W. Clark, and D. F. Nickols, city superintendent of schools.

Mr. Ford talked freely with reference to the proposed removal of the courthouse to Dearborn, but did not definitely state whether or not he would remove it.

#### Looking for Argument.

"If I had definitely determined to remove the courthouse, I would not be discussing the matter with you," said Mr. Ford. "I am here to get your viewpoint and to give you mine. I am looking for an argument."

Mr. Ford took the position that he was really building a college for the young at Dearborn in his American Village, where he was assembling those mementoes of early America which might teach the rising generation what he termed "a sense of justice." "The old Postville courthouse fits into this scheme," he said.

"At Dearborn," he stated, "millions will see the old structure and students of all countries could study it in its relation to the development of America. In its present location, it would be visited in a random fashion by but few."

#### Not Preserved Here.

Mr. Ford argued that the community of Lincoln could not properly preserve the building as the expense would be too great. At Dearborn, the timbers would be scientifically treated in such a manner that the building would last for five hundred years."

#### Travels in Ford Car.

Mr. Ford, traveling with his chauffeur in a 1929 sedan from Mr. Ford's factories, arrived at noon without previous announcement. He spent about twenty minutes at the Beach home, and then went out to inspect the building, returning to inquire about the original window frames which had been removed and stored on the Beach farm.

Mrs. Beach said that she was assured by Mr. Ford that the building would be kept and preserved as it should be and declared to him: "I sold it—you have the right to move it."

Mrs. Beach said: "Mr. Ford impressed me so much; so gracious and nice I was charmed to meet him and I think he is doing a great thing at Dearborn."

Before leaving Mr. Ford said he might return with Mrs. Ford for a longer visit with Mr. and Mrs. Beach.

During the conference with Judge Stringer, Mayor Clark and Mr. Nickols, held at the Commercial Hotel, Mr. Ford turned to Judge Stringer and said that he had seen a newspaper item in which Judge Stringer was reported as saying that if the building was removed from its environment, it would be a "meaningless and empty shell," but that perhaps he was misquoted.

#### In Lincoln Country.

Judge Stringer stated that he was not misquoted, that he had said just that thing, that he believed it then and that he still believes it—that the building stood in the heart of the Lincoln country, within a short distance of Lincoln's tomb and New Salem, that Lincoln trod the soil there and that it was the environment which gave historic value to the old structure. Prof. Nickols and Mayor Clark contended that the place for the building was just where it was and where it had been for a century.

Mr. Ford, on the contrary, believed that to allow the building to remain on its present site would be the way to make it "an empty shell," that in time it would disintegrate; that an attempt to make it a museum would be fruitless, as it would go the way of other attempts of that kind, but that at Dearborn, it would be perpetuated.

#### For "Greatest Good."

"My only desire," said Mr. Ford, "is to square my own conscience with what I think will be for the greatest good to the greatest number of people."

Mr. Ford sympathized with the

sentiment of the community in the local attachment to the old relic, but thought that the citizens should look at the matter from a broader viewpoint. He spoke for the co-operation of the community with him in making a perpetual memorial for the town at Dearborn, where the world would witness it.

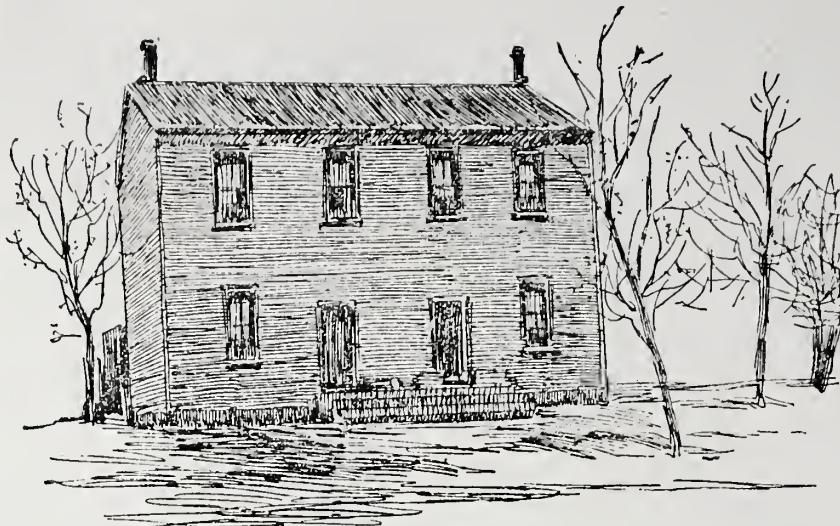
#### Asks for Statue.

During the conference Mayor Clark asked Mr. Ford that in the event the old courthouse was moved if he would erect a life-sized statue of Abraham Lincoln on the site. Mr. Ford replied that he would take good care of the ground, but that he could make no promises as to the statue.

The interviewers found Mr. Ford to be intensely human and easy of approach. He invited the interviewers to be his guests at the opening of the American Village October 21st. He also stated that he contemplates another visit to Lincoln in the near future.

Mr. Ford left as unostentatiously as he came, going directly back to Dearborn. He said that he had recently returned to Detroit from a visit with Edison in the east. On leaving Mr. Ford said that he wanted to get back home by last night.

Lincoln, Ill.



POSTVILLE COURTHOUSE,

## Ford Moves the Famous Lincoln Courthouse

BEFORE Abraham Lincoln became the sixteenth President of the United States, he practiced law. He was a lawyer and lived in a small town in Illinois called Postville. This town later became part of Lincoln, Ill.

Lincoln tried law cases in the Postville Courthouse. Many stories of his work there are told. One of these stories was told by the Judge in the courthouse. He said that in 1843 Lincoln was trying a case in court. He was the lawyer for a man who was trying to make another man pay a debt. During the trial, Lincoln found out that the man he was working for was not honest. He found out that the debt had already been paid.

During the noon hour, the court closed. After recess, Lincoln did not return to the courtroom. The Judge sent a man to look for him. He found Lincoln behind the courthouse playing ball. When asked why he didn't come in and go on with his case, Lincoln said:

"Tell the Judge I cannot come in. My hands are dirty and I want to clean them." (Lincoln knew that his man was not honest and he did not want to have anything to do with him. He wanted to forget the man's dishonesty by playing ball in the open air.) When the Judge was told Lincoln's answer, his only remark was, "Honest Abe!"

Henry Ford has bought the old courthouse where Lincoln worked as a lawyer. He moved it to his museum in Dearborn, Mich. (You read about the Henry Ford Museum in *My Weekly Reader* of Oct. 11 and Oct. 25.) Mr. Ford moved the old courthouse very carefully. He saved every bit of it, even the old nails. The plaster was put into sacks. The old plaster was put back on the walls, after the courthouse was rebuilt in the Museum Village.

Abraham Lincoln once lived at New Salem, Ill. It was there that he cast his first vote. It was there that he held his first public office. Lincoln was Postmaster of New Salem. He delivered the mail on horseback.

After Lincoln's time, the people of Salem moved to Petersburg, a near-by town. Salem became a deserted village. It was deserted until 1921, when it was opened as a park. Since then, part of the old town has been rebuilt. An old mill, an old inn, and some of the old stores and log cabins have been carefully put up. A museum has been built. It is filled with things that were once used by Abraham Lincoln. The Old Salem-Lincoln League of Petersburg hopes to rebuild every house in Old Salem, so that the village will be as it was when Lincoln lived there.



Lincoln Statue at Newark, N. J.

It is said that a man's fame is known by the memorials built to his memory. Few men have had more memorials built to their memory than has Abraham Lincoln. There are Lincoln memorials in all parts of the United States.

See directions for Story 1 on page 4.

From Peoria Star, Thurs. March 21, 1935

### Possess Key to Old Postville Courthouse

Springfield, Ill., March 21.—(INS)

—A six inch pass key, given him years ago and said to be the key to the old courthouse at Postville, the original site of the city of Lincoln and now a part of that city, is the property of Frank E. Scott of this

city. Scott visited Lincoln's Tomb recently. He is a former superintendent of the K. of P. childrens Home at Decatur.

Abraham Lincoln when a practicing attorney often tried cases in the old Postville courthouse. Some years ago Henry Ford purchased the building and moved it to Dearborn, a Detroit suburb, where numerous relics are displayed.

# Lincoln Evening Courier

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### THE STORY OF POSTVILLE.

A GREAT many chroniclers, in years gone by, have written accounts of the early days of Postville, forerunner of the City of Lincoln, which was founded one hundred years ago this year.

It has remained, however, for Judge L. B. Stringer, county historian, in a specially written history for the Lincoln Evening Courier, to present the revised down-to-date history of the first county seat town of Logan county.

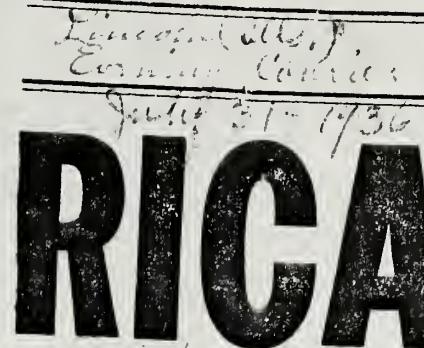
The new "Story of Postville," in observance of Centennial year, will be published in the Courier in three installments, beginning next Friday, August 7, and concluding August 10.

Since earlier histories of Logan county were compiled, a great many details concerning Postville have been discovered, and new facts verified.

The history of Postville is so closely interwoven with the earlier history of Logan county that the story of Postville is in reality the story of Logan county as it existed prior to 1861, the year of the union between Postville and the present City of Lincoln.

No one is better qualified than Judge Stringer to write the complete and authentic story of Postville. Every Logan county citizen will desire to read and preserve this bit of local history.

If you desire extra copies to forward to friends, please notify the Courier office at once and ask that copies be reserved for you.



## Pageant To Open 35th Chautauqua

Nineteen scenes of early Logan county history are included in the historical pageant which will be presented at the opening session of the 35th annual Lincoln Chautauqua Assembly Thursday evening, August 6.

Directed by Clarence A. Miller, the pageant will introduce important personages of the early 19th century and reproduce their connection with Logan county history.

### Begins With Indians.

The pageant will open with a series of scenes involving Logan county Indians and then will follow another group of scenes portraying the settlement of Elkhart Hill and Postville and the arrival of Robert Musick.

Other scenes now in rehearsal include life of the times, selection of the county seat, the county's contribution to the Mexican war, and finally the naming of the city of Lincoln and sale of town lots.

Raymond Warnisher will take the part of Abraham Lincoln and other persons famous in early county history will be played by prominent local persons. An effort will be made to have costuming as nearly historically accurate as possible.

Included in the cast are: N. L. Gordon, A. M. Sargent, Harold Heinle, B. C. Moore, Leslie Schildein, Francis Smalley, C. M. Weesner, Ivo Augspurger, Charles Gerard, Arthur Gard, Louis Cambre, William Kavelman, William Lorenzen, Robert Adkinson, Lawrence Hayes, Bob Gibbs and scores of others.

### List of Sequences.

Pageant scenes are outlined as follows:

1. Indians make peace.
2. Indians on war path.
3. Plan to attack Indians.
4. Treaty with Indians.
5. Latham at Elkhart Hill.
6. Musick at Salt Creek.
7. Russell Post.
8. John Deskin's tavern.
9. An early Fourth of July.
10. Early school.
11. Middletown's bid for county seat.
12. Mt. Pulaski's bid for county seat.
13. Choosing county seat.
14. Hurt's call to arms.
15. Departure of soldiers.
16. Wooden leg episode.
17. Postville Park.
18. Naming of Lincoln.
19. Sale of town lots.

State Register (1911) 101

## **Lincoln's Favorite Story Claimed for Postville Tavern**

1936

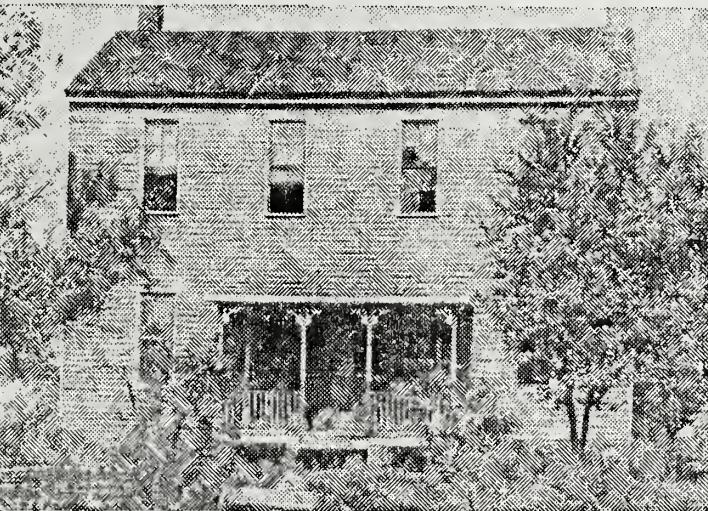
LINCOLN, Ill.—One of the favorite stories of Abraham Lincoln—he once owned a license to dispense liquor—concerned an episode in Deskins' Postville tavern just 100 years ago.

After Mr. Lincoln had retired there was a terrific pounding at the portals and a thirsty traveler noisily demanded whiskey. When the landlord delayed, the wayfarer cried: "Great Heavens, give me an ear of corn and a tincup; and I'll make it myself."

In after years Lincoln, in telling this story, always laid the scene of the anecdote in Postville.

Lincoln, Ill.

Lincoln Daily News  
2/12/40



**ILLINOIS LINCOLN SHRINE**—In this weather-beaten frame dwelling, Abraham Lincoln, a circuit-riding young lawyer, argued law some 90 years ago. It formerly stood on Highway 66 just west of Lincoln, in what was once known as Postville, but eight years ago was acquired by Henry Ford, and moved to the motor magnate's village of American historic shrines near Detroit.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND THE COURTHOUSE AT POSTVILLE,  
LOGAN COUNTY, ILLINOIS

restored at

Greenfield Village

Dearborn  
Michigan

Dr. Roger Van Bolt  
Historical Research Specialist  
The Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village  
Dearborn, Michigan .. April 1953

ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND THE COURTHOUSE AT POSTVILLE,  
LOGAN COUNTY, ILLINOIS

When Abraham Lincoln rode up to the new courthouse at Postville for the first time, probably in 1840, he gazed upon the most imposing building in Logan County, Illinois.

This two-story frame structure represented great progress in the settlement of the Sangamon prairies. Only two years before, in 1838, there had not even been a Logan County, and a mere half-dozen years before, Postville had been just a rise of ground along Salt Creek near the Springfield-Fort Clark Road. But the pioneer stage of settlement was passing in the Sangamon country. Population was advancing northward in Illinois, and with it went the political center of the state. On July 4, 1839, Governor Thomas Carlin had declared that Springfield, just thirty miles from Postville, would replace Vandalia as the capital of Illinois.

Land speculators had been very active in central Illinois. Russell Post, erstwhile ship chandler from Baltimore, now a merchant in corn and hogs in Sangamon County at Waynesville, had entered an eighty-acre claim at the land office in Springfield in the year 1835. He called upon John B. Watson, Abe Lincoln's surveying partner, to divide his claim into forty town lots. Post thereupon named his future metropolis after himself and Postville was a reality.

Within a few months, in the early part of 1836, Dr. Moses L. Knapp and Seth Tinsley of Springfield, along with Henry Bird, their financial backer from Philadelphia, were also on the scene. These enter-

prising gentlemen plotted an addition to the new city of Postville. In the same year, another sixty-four-block city addition was plotted by a third set of promoters, Richard Ackman and William Rankin. Postville in 1836 was a city containing over one hundred and fifty blocks--at least, on paper.

Ackman and Rankin erected a general store at the cost of \$70. Tinsley, the town promoter, erected another. The young town also saw its first physician in 1836 in the person of Dr. John Deskins. In addition to his medical practice, he also operated the town hotel and tavern in his home. Thus it was that in 1836 the stage was set for a boom in Postville.

Post sent out the notices of a public sale of lots. He advertised that Postville was "on a fine and elevated spot, overlooking all the surrounding country." He further advised prospective buyers of the advantages of this townsite by stating "Postville, is conveniently located for the trade of Salt Creek, Lower Kickapoo and Sugar Grove. In short, it is rarely surpassed either in point of beauty or local advantages."

Ackman and Rankin also sent out notices of a forthcoming sale of lots: "In consequence of the great demand for lots in the above town, the subscribers have been induced to offer for sale a number of lots. . . . Extensive improvements are now going up in the town. Postville being so well known, further description is deemed unnecessary."

The year 1837 dampened the spirits of the optimistic promoters of such enterprises as city building. This year was a depression year in the United States. The adventurous schemes to build railroads, roads, and canals to every part of the Middle West collapsed in the financial

panic. Corn and hogs were no longer in demand. Prospective buyers of city lots had no money to invest in the land so neatly laid out into blocks by the town promoters. During this year, Post was forced to sell his holdings to Knapp, Bird, and Tinsley for a song, and the founder of Postville was soon on his way to the newer West to seek another fortune. Eventually, he became a faith-healer in Minnesota.

Economic difficulties did not halt the cry for political reform. In 1838, claims were again being made that Sangamon County was too large, and that it was too far for many of the new settlers to travel to Springfield for court week. Abraham Lincoln had heard this before; the division of the county had been an issue in the campaign of 1832 when he had made his first bid from New Salem for public office. He was defeated then, but in 1834, two years later, he was elected to the legislature. By 1838, Lincoln was an old hand in the Assembly. He was chairman of the committee on counties which reported favorably on the bill to split sprawling Sangamon County, and the proposal became law early in 1839. Postville, the project of Knapp, Bird, and Tinsley, was to be the county seat of newly-created Logan County.

Seth Tinsley and his colleagues sacrificed both land and money to have the county seat located at Postville. Tinsley's agreement to carry out his bargain is still in existence. It stated:

Whereas a temporary seat of Justice is by law to be located in and for the county of Logan, Illinois. Now I, S. M. Tinsley do agree and hereby obligate myself to the said county in the event of said location being at the town of Postville that I will erect and inclose a framed building on the Public ground inclosed by Blocks #2-10-19-80-90-91 brick building to be 25 by 35 feet one story high the ground floor to be laid with good plank, the walls and ceiling lathed and plastered with sufficient windows and doors for admission of light and the whole to be completed on or before the first day of November, 1839 which building I will donate to the said county for a court house and other county purposes;

S. M. Tinsley

While the agreement sheds light on the intent of Tinsley and his partners (who now included James Adams of Springfield), this legal document also indicates that some rather far-reaching changes were made in Tinsley's original offer. The completed courthouse was neither brick nor one story in height. Nor does it seem to have been completed by November 1, 1839.

Later, when the county seat was made permanent, these promoters added more money to the bargain. This was a familiar pattern of the day, repeated many times in the Middle West.

While the courthouse was being constructed, the business of elected officials went on apace. The first election results tell something of the population of the county. When all the ballots were in, a total of 308 votes had been cast in the election. John Deskins, the town physician and hotel keeper, was elected sheriff. Jabez Capps of Mount Pulaski was elected recorder. Capps was an Englishman who had come early to Sangamon County. He was successively a school teacher, a merchant, and the town promoter of Mount Pulaski, Postville's rival for the county seat. Capps had temporarily lost the battle for the county seat, but more would be heard from him later.

Meanwhile, Tinsley and his associates went to work on the promised courthouse. Tinsley himself supervised the project. He hired one Peter J. Cowardin to build the structure. Its dimensions turned out to be 28 feet by 38 feet. The stone for the foundation had to be brought from Rocky Ford five miles to the West since the deep prairie sod had buried rock far below the surface. Walnut siding and oak timbers were brought to Postville from the mill of the Orendorffs, Germans from North Carolina who lived on nearby Salt Creek. This part of the county seat bargain cost the proprietors, according to Tinsley, \$1,176.83.

When completed in 1840, the interior of the two-story building provided offices for the county officials as well as a court room. Whether the court room was on the first or second floor is a matter of conjecture. Local historians have written that the court room was on the second floor, but during the process of restoration in 1929, those in charge of the project believed that a raised judge's platform existed on the first floor. Hallway partition marks were found on the second floor, supporting this theory.

At about the time when the courthouse was completed, the county hired Elisha Parks to construct a jail near the courthouse. This building, made of notched logs, was 12 feet square and two stories high. The interior of the jail was covered with heavy oak planks, about two inches thick.

The new courthouse served as the church and the assembly room, as well as the seat of justice of Logan County. Here the circuit preachers lashed out at the devil. Peter Cartwright of Pleasant Plains, the great Methodist preacher of Central Illinois, here exhorted the citizens of Logan County many times during the life of the courthouse. This tireless elder campaigned in Logan County in 1846 for Congress, running against lawyer Lincoln.

"Court week" was a time for excitement in the county seat hamlets, such as Postville. As one western traveler put it, "Court week is a general holiday. Not only suitors, jurors, and witnesses, but all who can spare the time, brush up their coats, and brush down their horses to go to Court." Although a settler might not have many neighbors, he often found a cause to "go to the law" against them. Men quarreled with each other over livestock, property lines, and bad debts. To argue it out in

court was often a pleasant diversion from the lonely life on a prairie farm. But there were also crimes, and justice had to be meted out. During Lincoln's years on the circuit, probably one out of every five cases brought to trial was a criminal case, and one out of every three a chancery case. The remainder were cases in the field of common law.

The lawyer who traveled the circuit could usually not afford to select his clients. Lincoln and his fellow members of the bar usually took any and all cases. The court records seem to indicate that the majority of Lincoln's cases were in the field of common law.

The new county organization in Illinois brought the need for new judicial circuits, and in 1839, Logan County became a part of the newly-created eighth circuit. Although the area of this circuit was changed from time to time, it was tremendous in size. At one time, its geographical area was 11,000 miles, or slightly larger than the state of Maryland.

The judge of the new eighth circuit was Samuel H. Treat of Springfield. The judge, a native of New York, was not yet thirty years of age, and he had lived in Illinois for only five years. Politically, he and Lincoln were on opposite sides of the fence, but as was the custom of the day, they probably rode together many times from Springfield to Postville.

Serving a thinly scattered population, the lawyers of Lincoln's day had to ride the circuit in order to make a living. Fees were small, sometimes as low as fifty cents, and the rivalry among the members of the legal profession was great. Some lawyers had very little formal training--Lincoln was an example. Others had been well trained in the eastern states but had moved west looking for new opportunities. The circuit was a great melting pot where all of them matched legal talents and wits.

To Lincoln's partner, the frequently cantankerous Billy Herndon, life on the circuit was a "soul's sore trial." Years later, Herndon wrote: "No human being would now endure what we used to on the circuit. I have slept with 20 men in the same room---some on bed ropes---some on quilts---some on sheets---a straw or two under them; and oh---such victuals---Good God!" But Lincoln seemed to thrive on the circuit. The pranks, the friendships he formed, the moot courts, and the long hours of story telling in the evenings compensated for the weary hours of travel and the poor lodgings. With a few law books in a saddlebag or under the seat of a buggy, the itinerant barrister set out to cover the circuit. He met his clients a few hours before the trial, and since there was little time for long and learned briefs, the lawyer's wit and stock of stories were often substitutes for the finer practices of the profession.

Postville provided a typical scene during "court week." Dr. Deskin's tavern across the street, the two general stores, and the few homes were scenes of excitement twice each year, in September and in June.

The record of Lincoln the lawyer in the Postville Courthouse is scant, for the Logan County legal records were burned in 1857. A few case records have survived, however. He defended Cowardin, the builder of the courthouse, in 1842. In 1844, he participated in a partition suit and in 1846 in a divorce suit. The nearness of Logan County to his home in Springfield and the fact that Lincoln was a tireless rider of the circuit would seem to indicate that he was there on many court days during the period 1840-1847 of which no record exists. In 1847, Lincoln went to Washington to serve his only term in Congress, and he did not ride the circuit again for two years.

It not only meant more fees for Lincoln the lawyer to travel the circuit, but it was also good politics for Lincoln the politician, Logan County was reliable in the eyes of the Whig party leaders of the Seventh Congressional District.

During most of the time that the Postville Courthouse was in use, Lincoln was out of public office, but he had not closed his eyes to political ambition. In March of 1841, Lincoln had ended his career as state legislator, but his partner from 1837 to 1841, John T. Stuart, was the Whig Congressman from Illinois 1837-1843, followed by John T. Hardin and Edward D. Baker for one term each. In 1846, Lincoln was chosen by his party. His Democratic opponent was the old Methodist circuit rider who mixed religion and politics--Peter Cartwright. Both men included Postville in their respective circuits. This time Lincoln won the battle, with Logan County giving him 70 per cent of its 556 votes. Late in October 1847, Lincoln departed for Washington; his circuit days at Postville (by now named Camden) were over.

The days of the courthouse were also numbered, for in April of 1849, the Sangamo Journal in Springfield reported: "The people of Logan County, on the 3d inst. by a majority of 175, voted that the county seat of that county, should be removed to Mount Pulaski. That town is growing." Jabez Capps and his fellow town promoters had regained the advantage they had lost in 1839.

But Lincoln was to have one more opportunity to become involved with the courthouse. In 1849, the proprietors of the town of Camden and/or Postville sought to recover the building and the land which they had given to the county in 1839, since the building and the landed

property were no longer being used as the seat of justice. Abraham Lincoln, again on the circuit after his single term in Congress, defended Logan County. After a long litigation, the State Supreme Court ruled against the proprietors. Eventually the county sold the building to Solomon Kahn, a merchant, for \$300. The courthouse then became a store building.

A stage in the development of the Sangamon country had passed. During these ten years, Abraham Lincoln had also matured. The junior partner of the law firm of Stuart & Lincoln had become the senior partner in the firm of Lincoln & Herndon. The bachelor had become the husband of Mary Todd and the father of Robert Todd and Edward Baker Lincoln. He had acquired the only home he ever was to own--the homestead at Eighth and Jackson streets in Springfield. (The donor of the Logan County Courthouse, Seth Tinsley of Springfield, received the first payment, \$750 from Lincoln). Finally, the former state legislator had been elected to Congress and had served one term in Washington. In another ten years, he would travel again to Washington to become President of the United States. With him would go the experiences, friendships, and the memories of "court week" at Postville and the other county seats on the Eighth Circuit.

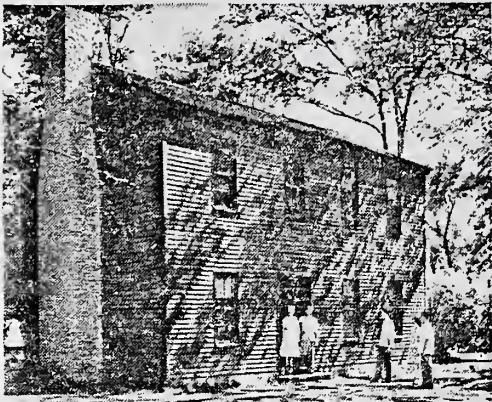
# Illinois Shrines Tell the Story of Abraham Lincoln

## State Deserves Its Slogan

By Florence Weed  
"Land of Lincoln" slogans on Illinois automobile license tags point up the fact that Illinois has at least a dozen impressive shrines commemorating the life of the Civil war President and an equal number of minor memorials marked by bronze tablets, telling what our greatest citizen said or did there.

To see most of these shrines, a traveler might start down on the Wabash river near Lawrenceville, where the Lincoln family first entered Illinois, and follow the Lincoln National highway northwesterly for 250 miles to Beardstown on the Illinois river.

Near the Lincoln Memorial bridge over the Wabash, in a small roadside park, stands the Lincoln trail monument—a handsome stone slab on which is carved in bas-relief a picture of the Lincoln family walking beside their ox drawn covered wagon.



The Logan county courthouse, built in 1840, was removed from Illinois and preserved in Greenfield Village at Dearborn, Mich. Young Lincoln pleaded his first legal case in this frontier courthouse and often appeared as a circuit rider.

When the family came to Illinois in March, 1830, Abe Lincoln was 21 years old and stood 6 feet 4 inches tall. His family consisted of his father, Thomas; stepbrothers and sisters; and his affectionate stepmother, Sarah, who understood Abe's yearning for an education. After the slow overland journey, the Lincoln family settled in Macon county. One year later Abe left home to make his own way. He settled in the backwoods village of New Salem and lived there six years.

New Salem has been faithfully rebuilt on its original site, about 20 miles northwest of Springfield in Menard county. Walking in the grassy street, you see a replica of the log cabin store where Lincoln sold such pioneer gear as is collected on the crude shelves. Nearby is a grist mill, such as Lincoln managed, and the unsuccessful store where Lincoln and his partner failed in business. While repaying his debts, Abe worked as postmaster, surveyor, and railsplitter. Here he acquired his fame as a humorous story teller and a wrestler that could take on all comers.

New Salem also has a replica of the Rutledge tavern where Lincoln lived when he knew Ann Rutledge, although their tragic romance is now generally discounted. In this village, Lincoln studied law, ran for the Illinois legislature, and was elected on his second try in 1834. Three years later he removed to Springfield.

For the next 20 years, the Illinois capital was Lincoln's

Chicago Sunday Tribune  
Chicago, Illinois  
April 17, 1960

permanent home. Here he courted and married Mary Todd, a Kentucky belle who came north to visit her sister. For two years the couple lived in boarding houses and at the Globe tavern, the location of which is marked. In 1844 the Lincolns and their baby son moved into their first home bought for \$1,500. It was the only house Lincoln ever owned.

Today this national shrine appears much as it did when the Lincolns lived there. Many of the original furnishings and Lincoln mementoes have been returned to the home and are surrounded by authentic pieces of the period. As Lincoln became successful in law and politics, the house was the scene of parties and visits from politicians. In the north parlor, Lincoln was notified of his nomination to the Presidency.

On the last day the Lincolns held a public reception which was attended by thousands. The Lincolns left for Washington from the old Springfield railroad station, marked, but now used as a freight building. Lincoln's touching farewell to Springfield, given from the platform of the rear car on a rainy Feb. 11, 1861, is preserved on a plaque in the Lincoln tomb.

During the years the Lincolns lived in Washington, the house was rented for \$350 a year. In 1887, the home was given to the State of Illinois by Robert Todd Lincoln, a son.

Following Lincoln's assassination in Washington in 1865, his body was returned to Springfield on a black draped railroad car which stopped in several capital cities along the route. It is now entombed in the great marble sarcophagus in Oak Ridge cemetery, Springfield. The tomb,

guarded day and night, is open to visitors every day of the year. From the talk given

by the caretaker you learn that some years ago, after a plot to open the tomb was thwarted, the bronze casket was sunk in concrete so that it can never be reached by ordinary means.

Unique among these familiar shrines is the Lincoln Memorial garden. Founded in 1936 on the shore of Lake Springfield on the outskirts of the Illinois capital, just off U. S. highway 66, this 60 acre memorial of the Illinois Garden club has grown from an area of undistinguished farm land to a beautiful native garden.

Fanning out from Springfield are other Lincoln memorials. The Lincoln Log Cabin State park, built on the Lincoln farm, 8 miles south of Charleston, contains a replica of the last home of Abraham Lincoln's father, Thomas. In nearby Shiloh cemetery Lincoln's father and stepmother are buried.

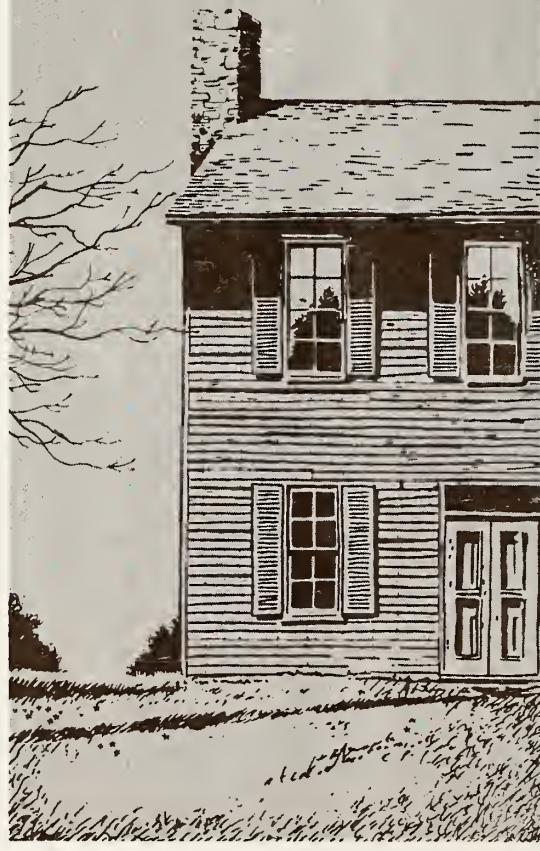
Also marked are two

century old buildings where Abraham Lincoln worked as a circuit riding lawyer on the old 8th Circuit court, the Metamora courthouse in Woodford county, and the Mount Pulaski courthouse in Logan county. Lincoln also served in the legislature in the first Illinois State House in Vandalia.

Illinois also was the scene of the famous Lincoln-Douglas debates of the Presidential campaign of 1858. Still preserved is the cottage of Francis E. Bryant in Benten, Pratt county, where Lincoln met Stephen A. Douglas, opposition candidate, July 29, 1858, to plan the debates on the slavery issue. Sites of these seven debates, which gave Abraham Lincoln a national reputation and sent him along to the Presidency, are marked in the cities of Freeport, Ottawa, Galesburg, Quincy, Charles-ton, Alton, and Jonesboro.

# postville courthouse

STATE HISTORIC SITE





Logan County Courthouse

original in safe

# postville courthouse

STATE HISTORIC SITE



## THE COURTHOUSE

**New Community:** When Russell Post mapped out a new community in 1835, his optimism infected other land speculators who also bought property. Between their holdings and his, Postville was expanded by 1836 to a city of 150 blocks—on paper.

But a depression struck in 1837 and Post was forced to sell most of his property. It was acquired by the firm of Knapp, Bird and Tinsley.

Two years later Logan County was carved out of Sangamon County and the state legislature adopted a circuit court system. Seth M. Tinsley, one of the three new developers, offered to construct a courthouse in Postville at no cost to the newly created county. His inducement was a deciding factor in Postville's selection as county seat by one vote over Mt. Pulaski.

**Construction:** Tinsley supervised construction of the building which cost him and his partners \$1,176.83. It was a two-story structure measuring 38 feet by 28 feet, with a stone foundation, oak beams, walnut siding and contained county offices as well as court facilities. Adjacent to it, the county later built a two-story, 12-foot square log jail paneled inside with oak planks two inches thick.

During construction of the courthouse, court sessions were held in the dining room at Dr. John Deskins' Tavern across the street.

**Holidays:** The building functioned as a civic center meeting hall, site for public gatherings and even as a church, but the high points of its calendar always were the semi-annual "Court Weeks," which were something of a general holiday. As one western traveler wrote: "Not only suitors, jurors and witnesses, but all who can spare the time, brush up their coats and brush down their horses to go to court."

**County Seat Moved:** The seat of county government was shifted to Mt. Pulaski in 1848 for much the same reason it originally was established at Postville—Mt. Pulaski officials erected a fine new two-story courthouse, which is also a state memorial.

In 1855 the county government was moved again, this time to Lincoln, where it remains today.

The final chapter on Postville and its courthouse was written in 1865 when the thriving, growing city of Lincoln reached out, surrounded and finally absorbed Postville completely within its municipal boundaries.

## THE CIRCUIT COURT SYSTEM

Illinois' circuit court system, adopted in 1839, was patterned after that of Kentucky. The state was divided into multi-county circuits, each with a judge who traveled from county to county within his jurisdiction until he completed the judicial business of each county. Court sessions sometimes lasted as long as six weeks at a county seat.

Following the same route were groups of traveling lawyers who met with their clients on courthouse lawns, under nearby trees or on the public streets. At night they gathered convivially in village inns. Some of these men had been well educated in the east, while others, like Lincoln, had little formal training. "Circuit-riding" provided a real test of an attorney's legal skill and wisdom. Attorneys of Lincoln's day served a thinly scattered population and had to ride the circuit in order to make a living.



**Eighth Judicial Circuit:** It was a hard life with

small fees, pioneer living conditions and extensive, difficult travel. The Eighth Judicial Circuit, for example, was very large, at one time encompassing 11,000 square miles, slightly larger than the state of Maryland.

There were periodic alterations, but none of these appreciably reduced the circuit's size during the time Lincoln followed the route regularly.

Lincoln labored on the Eighth Circuit full time for a dozen years and on a part time basis for several more, but he seemed to thrive in that environment. His famous story telling sessions, the close friendships he formed and the political contacts he made in those years apparently compensated him for the weary hours of travel, the poor food and inferior lodging. Except for the two years he served in Congress, he devoted at least half of each year to circuit traveling until he became President.

## LINCOLN AT POSTVILLE

A fire in 1857 destroyed Logan County's records. Consequently, little is known about the cases handled by Lincoln at Postville.

One of few accounts of his Logan County activities came from the late Judge Lawrence B. Stringer of Lincoln. He told of Lincoln's involvement in litigation which developed around the sale of Postville's courthouse grounds after the county seat was switched to Mt. Pulaski.

Judge Stringer pointed out that although Knapp, Bird and Tinsley had lured the county seat to Postville with a promise to erect a courthouse and to deed both the building and its site to the county without reservation or conditions, they sued for damages nonetheless when county officials sold the property.

According to the story told by Judge Stringer, Lincoln appeared on behalf of the county board of supervisors to defend their sale of the courthouse and its grounds to private interests. Two of his law partners, Stuart and Logan, and a son of Governor Ninian Edwards represented the proprietors. The case was tried before Judge David Davis at Mt. Pulaski in August, 1849.

"Mr. Lincoln contended that the agreement was 'against public policy and founded on corruption,' and that, in deeding the land without reservations, the proprietors took their chances on the people changing the county seat," Judge Stringer reported. Lincoln's arguments were upheld by both the Circuit and U.S. Supreme Courts in what has been regarded since as a landmark decision.

## REPRODUCTION

The present structure is a reproduction. The original was purchased by Henry Ford in 1929 and moved to his Greenfield Village at Dearborn, Michigan, despite protests by some of Logan County's leading citizens. It still stands at Dearborn facing the village green, adjacent to the Thomas Edison laboratories.

At the time it was bought, the courthouse was occupied rent-free by a poor family. During the two previous decades, its owner, T. T. Beach, had attempted unsuccessfully to donate the building and grounds to Logan County with the condition that the board of supervisors would maintain them. The site was used as a playground for many years after removal of the building.

The 1.14-acre square site was given to the state as a memorial by Logan County Historical Society in 1953. Reconstruction of the building began immediately with plans drawn from the original structure at Greenfield Village.

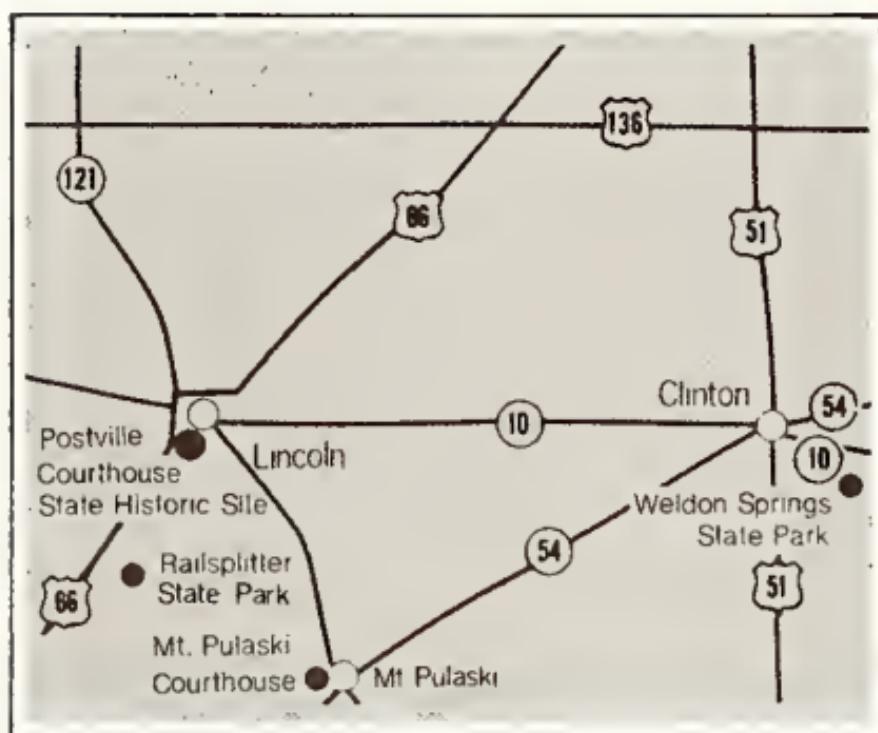
The state first erected the courthouse's exterior in conjunction with the centennial celebration in Lincoln. Then, late in 1955, a contract was let for reconstruction of the interior plastering, painting and installation of a heating plant and public toilets in the basement.

Court furnishings are authentic period pieces which give the historic old room its original appearance. Among the building's exhibits are several dealing with early Illinois judicial practices.

## FOR YOUR INFORMATION ...

Nearby Lincoln points of interest are the Lincoln Home, the Old State Capitol and the Lincoln Tomb, all in Springfield. Other state parks and memorials involving Lincoln include Lincoln Log Cabin, Railsplitter State Park, Lincoln Trail, Lincoln Trail Homestead, Lincoln's New Salem, Lincoln Monument, Lincoln Trail Monument, Mt. Pulaski Courthouse, Metamora Courthouse and Vandalia Statehouse.

For further information concerning Illinois State Historic Sites write to the Department of Conservation, 405 E. Washington, Springfield, IL 62706.



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POSTVILLE COURTHOUSE

DRAWER 12A

ILLINOIS IN GENERAL

